

The Decatur Plan

1920



The Decatur Plan

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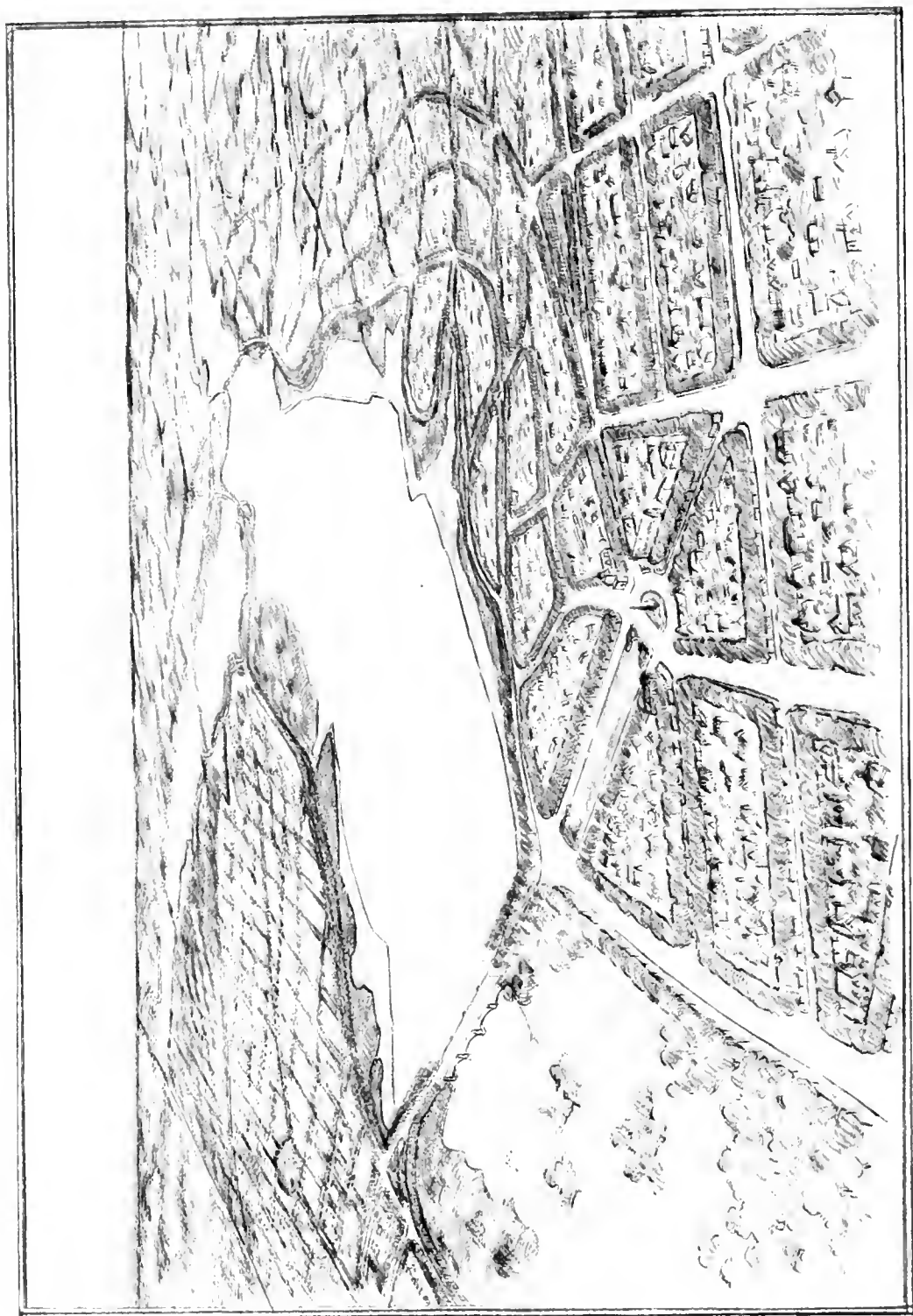
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Bird's eye view looking northeast over impounding reservoir, now being built, and showing proposed street layout and parkings.

“The City Practical”

The Decatur Plan

Made for the

City Plan Commission
of Decatur, Illinois

By

Myron Howard West

of the

American Park Builders

Chicago



Published by the

Association of Commerce

1920

THIS book is published by the Association of Commerce. The expense of making the City Plan was defrayed from a fund contributed by Decatur citizens at the suggestion and solicitation of the City Plan Commission, a committee of the Association of Commerce ∞ ∞

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DECATUR CITY PLAN COMMISSION

In the month of April, 1919, the City Plan Commission was appointed.

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Citizens National Bank	Mrs. M. W. Fitzpatrick
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Farmers State Bank & Trust Co.	Brown's Floral Store

FOREWORD

WHILE the temptation is to tell the story of the city plan in considerable detail, it is probable that a summarized schedule of events will serve as well, and will more effectively illustrate the characteristic way in which Decatur gets things done. Here then is the tabloid history:

Dec. 9, 1918—Directors of Association of Commerce hear a presentation of a city plan by T. J. Moreau.

Feb. 25, 1919—Appointment of a City Planning Commission approved.

March 6, 1919—Scope of City Planning presented in public address by T. J. Moreau, of Chicago, and George D. Roper, of Rockford.

April 11, 1919—American Park Builders of Chicago engaged by Commission to make the plan.

April 16, 1919—Myron Howard West begins work.

April 18, 1920—Commission adopts Mr. West's report.

May 4, 1920—Association of Commerce adopts report of Commission.

May 20, 1920—City Plan presented to the public.

The term "Commission" is a misnomer, tolerated by the Association of Commerce and perhaps encouraged in order to give a little dignity to what is really only one of its committees, a purely voluntary body without a particle of power under any existing law.

With this confession let some of its accomplishments may be recited.

It raised quietly and without any special drive nearly \$3,600 to pay the engineer.

It brought in a complete and final report in a little more than a year after it had been appointed.

It has presented the plan to the public through the Association of Commerce meeting, through the city plan exhibit at the Decatur Industrial exhibition in the Art institute and through numerous lectures to clubs and other organizations.

It has obtained from the plat committee of the board of supervisors the promise that new additions shall conform to the city plan.

It has conferred with the City Council on matters pertaining to making available the industrial district and putting the zoning law into operation.

It has supplied all railroads and interurban lines operating in Decatur with charts and text of the City plan which affect the railroads.

It has outlined and presented to the board of education a course in city planning suitable for adoption in the public schools with the recommendation that it be included in the curriculum.

It has committees at work on such subjects as street furnishing, an improved street car system, zoning, freight yard development and grade crossing elimination, and conference with real estate interests.

Its work has only just begun and never will be completed. Years hence when Decatur has attained a population of 100,000 or the 150,000 for which it had been planned the commission or its successor will still be engaged upon the plan, for in the very nature of things work directing the growth of a growing city must be unending.

It is with a feeling of satisfaction combined with concern that the commission presents this book to the public.

On the shelves of too many municipal offices lie city plans dust covered and forgotten. Some conscientious engineer with vision and ideals has forecasted a community's needs as Mr. West has forecasted Decatur's; the plan, providing for a development, making both for harmony and convenience, has been received with quite as much favor as the Decatur plan, and then as the first enthusiasm has abated, the community has gone on unheeding, development has continued in the old sprawling, haphazard style, without unity, harmony or intelligence. Such is the tragedy of city planning.

May the justly boasted civic spirit of Decatur and a kindly Providence save us from this!

Mr. West has conceived of an orderly arranged, easily tra-

versed city where everything shall have its proper place. He has not builded out of idealistic dreams a New Jerusalem, but he has planned for an American industrial, commercial and residential city to work and live in. He has touched only incidentally upon beautification because, with order, beauty will come. If with this plan to guide us we lapse into our old errors of reckless and selfish platting which leave us ugly street jogs, if we squeeze in our factories along railroad main lines or place them where they will defile quiet residential neighborhoods, where they cannot expand, if we neglect our parks and drives, leave our main thoroughfares dangerously narrow, and permit our railroad crossings to remain at grade, we shall sin against ourselves and our children.

It is no argument against the plan if its every detail cannot be carried out. Undoubtedly, more practical and feasible methods, which will warrant a departure from the recommendations will suggest themselves, but our purpose should be to give the plan the benefit of the doubt in every instance, and not to depart from it until we are certain that the alternative is an improvement.

And so this book goes out to the people of Decatur, whose intelligent interest and financial support have made the plan possible, to public officials, from whom the Commission expects and has received kindly co-operation, to the schools, where it will be studied, and to civic organizations, and libraries in Decatur and elsewhere.

Strictly it represents the ideals of Mr. West, but in a larger sense it voices the hopes and aspirations of all the people for the city which they love.

Respectfully submitted,

WARREN F. HARDY,
Chairman City Plan Commission.

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

Chicago, April 12, 1920.

To the City Planning Commission of Decatur, Illinois.

Ladies and Gentlemen: Herewith is submitted a report and recommendations illustrated, dealing with possible improvements and a scheme of extension for the city of Decatur. This is in accordance with our contract with you dated April 12th, 1919.

Very truly yours,

AMERICAN PARK BUILDERS,

Myron H. West, President.

Introduction

INTRODUCTION

A CITY is an instrument of man, built to aid in the earning of a livelihood and to furnish domicile. Primarily, it is a place in which to carry on work; incidentally, a place in which to live near where work is performed.

Once cities were fortified groups of homes from which people sallied forth to tend their crops and herds. Today they are machines turning out wealth and tended by a surrounding population living in the tenements, the closely built homes, the sparse suburbs and even on the scattered farms beyond.

The success of a city, like a factory, is dependent on the quantity and quality of its output, whether it be a city of industry, or trade, of pleasure or health resorts, or whatever line of work it may elect. In turn, generally, the city's work is made possible by transportation, so that location on an harbor, a navigable river or one or more railroads becomes necessary.

Fundamentally, the three main elements of a city therefore are transportation, facilities for work and homes. If a city is to become a good instrument, these elements must each be well built and must co-ordinate properly.

City Planning has to do with such co-ordination or the fitting together of the city's main and lesser factors so that the city as a whole may function to the best advantage and become as good a machine as possible.

In the improvement of the elements of which the city is built, almost every branch of science has been applied, with the result that progress with respect to these elements has kept pace with the times. Development with relation to harbors, railroads, electric lines, buildings, water and sanitary systems and lighting, the control of fire and disease, the manufacture and handling of goods, the building of streets and bridges, all these are being well done by carefully trained experts who are striving constantly for improvement.

That which remains is to arrange these elements to form a satisfactory whole. The tragedy of our cities in the past and the great danger to them in the future, is that this important service has not in most cases and may not in many cases, be rendered.

It is important that cities be well put together. It is important to the prosperity, health and happiness of not only every dweller of the city of today, but to all those who may live and do business in the city through the years to come.

Cities are in actual competition with one another, both by natural and artificial processes. Some cities have natural advantages, which becoming generally realized, produce an accelerated growth at the expense of nearby communities. Again, there have been examples, especially in the newer sections of the country where, although the cities in question were poorly located and badly built, they have by active boosting, been brought into prominence; their permanency and prestige have been established, even at the expense of communities holding better potential advantages.

Citizens' associations everywhere are spending money freely to build up their respective communities by inducing manufacturing or other enterprises, which in turn will increase population, build up trade and produce higher land values. This brings about a purely commercial competition among cities and makes it apparent that any city needs exert itself whether for the purpose of forging ahead of its competitors or preventing these same competitors from sucking its own life blood. Darwin's theory, that of the survival of the fittest, applies to cities as surely as to the animal kingdom.

While success in building up cities has no doubt attended clever salesmanship and skilfully engineered propaganda, in which minor features of spectacular nature have been given undue prominence and while in other cases cities have grown large and prosperous by reason of natural advantages, the great majority of cities, like the great majority of men, belong to the class—ordinary. Having their beginning like other neighboring villages, they have by reason of a factory, a mine, a railroad intersection or some such advantage, grown more rapidly and have taken on the aspect of cities. However, while undergoing development up to this point, other equally endowed villages in other zones of influence have done the same and there has sprung up over the country, a series of ordinary small cities.

These in turn enter competition, none are susceptible to boom methods and none have the natural advantages such as would

cause the making of a metropolis. Competition among this group becomes a matter of creating civic values, in other words, the best city is apt to win from this point on.

Quality in cities is dependent first of all upon good arrangement in building. A well arranged city, one which is convenient and attractive, which has ample parks and playgrounds, good public buildings, a fine business section, a good water supply, good schools and the like and which above all is well put together, soon becomes known as a desirable place in which to live and naturally draws to itself new lines of industry with their attendant operatives. No city can reasonably expect to attain and maintain this civic quality without adopting and following a definite, scientific and practical plan. Practically every American city demonstrates the fallacy of attempting to build the city machine without forethought.

In the beginnings of our cities, there was generally a street plan, often comprising only a few city blocks, but which at least was orderly. As time progressed and additions were made, even a semblance of orderliness was lost, and, year by year, while various features within the city underwent rapid improvement, the city in arrangement became more complex and hodgepodge in character. This has brought about alarming conditions. The expenditure of large sums of money has been made necessary to correct mistakes which should have been obvious at first and would have been unthinkable, had the crudest sort of a city plan been available to follow.

The problem of planning for a city already established divides itself into two general parts, first, that of designing a layout of streets, railroads, car lines, factory districts, residential sections, etc., on lands surrounding the present built up city to provide for future growth. The second problem is that of suggesting corrections, rearrangement and improvement of the present city, that it may properly connect and function with this future extension and that it may become satisfactory in itself and not run the danger of being abandoned in later years because of its shortcomings.

Of the two general problems, the first is, without question, the more important, although generally less appreciated. A new city complete in all its elements is designed on virgin territory. The

science of modern city planning is brought to bear with full consideration given to local conditions and a policy is outlined which may be followed for generations to guide the cities' growth. In this case, no expense is called for other than that which must, in any event, take place if the city is to grow. Indeed, if wisely planned, economies are generally shown, which compared with past development are of startling magnitude. Most important of all, however, a scientific co-ordination of city elements is provided, only by which a really efficient, attractive and convenient tool of civilization may be built.

The part of the problem pertaining to the remodeling of the old city, while necessarily more spectacular in its nature and more costly to bring about, should be approached with caution and conservatism and should be carried out only as time and financial ability make expedient.

On the other hand, when once decided upon, these changes, radical as they may appear, should be carried through courageously and to a definite purpose. The investment is too large to be jeopardized by allowing this nucleus of the greater city to become antiquated, as has been true in cities like New Orleans, where the French Quarter, once complete unto itself, is now looked upon as an interesting but unimportant adjunct to the great new community extending beyond Canal Street.

The problem of the old city is a difficult one, for the city planner, not only from an engineering standpoint but because of those discouraging circumstances which always attend the tearing down of that which was built with effort and cost. It is disheartening to correct mistakes, there is always the thought of wasted effort and of retraced steps, which should have been made in the right direction at first. To the citizens the following out of this part of the program, means bond issues and taxes. While generally, these improvements may be demonstrated as thoroughly worth while of themselves, irrespective of their relation to far reaching benefits, and while many times these projects of reconstruction please the popular mind, not the least value given to the community is the lesson they drive home. A people forced to pay so heavily for the correction of past mistakes, will be loath to allow their city to go on year by year insidiously duplicating these errors.

The time to build a good city is when subdivisions are accepted on record. These apparently insignificant groups of house lots with their seemingly innocent plan for street layout, are the prime menace to the American city. In fact probably nine-tenths of every city of the country has been planned and built by individual property owners, whose chief interest has centered on getting as much out of a few acres of land as possible. The streets thus carelessly designed and located with the sole purpose of creating profit to individuals become the arteries of the city. Their frequent change in width and direction, their constantly recurring dead ends, their lack of proper gradient, all spell inconvenience which in turn spells an inestimable loss to city users.

The building of a city by sporadic individual effort without regard for the common good, cannot continue if cities are to fulfill their true purpose.

The benefits of city planning do not end with the improvement of the physical city, they extend to the creation of civic pride. Civic pride makes for ambition and serious effort. This, once crystallized and properly directed may give to the city that character by which it is made outstanding. It is difficult to center one's faith on a purposeless city, one which is drifting like a ship without a rudder. A corporation which is unable to show a policy has difficulty in selling its stock.

The city plan may be visualized. It can be held up as a definite goal. It creates a new vision, a widened horizon, an incentive to united effort. The city plan has none of partisanship, it favors all sections alike. Sectional jealousies which have held back so many communities must break down, once the true scope and meaning of the plan is appreciated.

The plan is worth while, if but a single mistake is therewith forestalled. At a minimum city planning must pay, on the average it means to the city what a constitution means to a state, education to a person, a plan to a building. At the maximum, backed by intelligent public opinion it may become the gospel by which the city will be lead to the realization of high ideals. The plan will guard the city from the rampaging of stupid or vicious administrations and will be welcomed as a long looked for aid by patriotic and efficient city governments.

To the Association of Commerce and other civic bodies, the city plan becomes of great moment. Not only does it present the very best agency for advertising the city—for it shows a definite purpose—expressed concretely, but it provides a standard by which the various ideas of citizens concerning desired improvements may be checked. Led by impulse, such organizations are in danger of exerting their force to create benefits which later fall short of expectations. By reason of lacking perspective, other equally important benefits are at the time overlooked and are found to be obstructed when their time for consideration arrives.

A city plan falls short of its true possibilities if it fails to aid in all phases of communal life. While the report and illustrating drawings of the planner may seemingly deal with but physical elements and may even neglect some of these, city planning carried to the n-th power may include the greater human problems, met with in the modern city. Health, recreation, education, ethics, morals, home building, industrial policy, relations with other cities and especially with the closely allied farming communities, all these fittingly come under a comprehensive program for extending, strengthening and upbuilding the community. The term "city plan" may be fittingly applied only to such a broad program.

The City of Decatur



Compiled to show outlying roads and latest subdivisions of record
Area plotted in city street, 4000 acres
Area built up 3770 acres

THE CITY OF DECATUR

DECATUR typifies the energetic, sound, fast growing cities of the middle west. There is nothing of Decatur that is sordid, no crowded tenements, no sweatshops, no mills crowded with women or overworked children, no narrow streets flanked with shacks and basement living quarters.

Visiting Decatur after seeing the conditions under which people live in some cities abroad or even in the older cities of our own country, one feels a great relief. Decatur is "no mean city" yet there is room for improvement and being superior in physical condition to so many other cities, there is all the more reason for exercising prudence and forethought concerning her future development.

Decatur was well placed, whether by intention or accident. Here, a wonderful fertile country of great potential wealth made a city inevitable. The discovery of coal underlying all the region, the advent of railroads centering here from many directions, together with the agricultural wealth of the region, made constant growth a certainty. Merely to take care of the trade of the tributary country, would have made the city possible. But Decatur has become more than a city of local influence. That energy and resourcefulness which caused the wild plains of a hundred years ago to become the built up empire of today, has brought to Decatur over one hundred thirty manufacturing enterprises, with a yearly output of some sixteen million dollars.

Decatur is a good city in which to live. The climate is equable, the city is freely supplied with schools and churches. Music, art and higher education are centered here. The topography hereabouts is charmingly diversified on account of the creeks and river giving a grateful change to the monotony of rolling prairie around. The city is not out of the world, but a few hours' ride takes one to other modern and populous centers.

Decatur is surrounded by markets. The tributary population has far from reached its maximum. There is no great city near to rob her of her individuality, yet she is sufficiently close to the great metropolis of the middle west to secure therefrom advan-

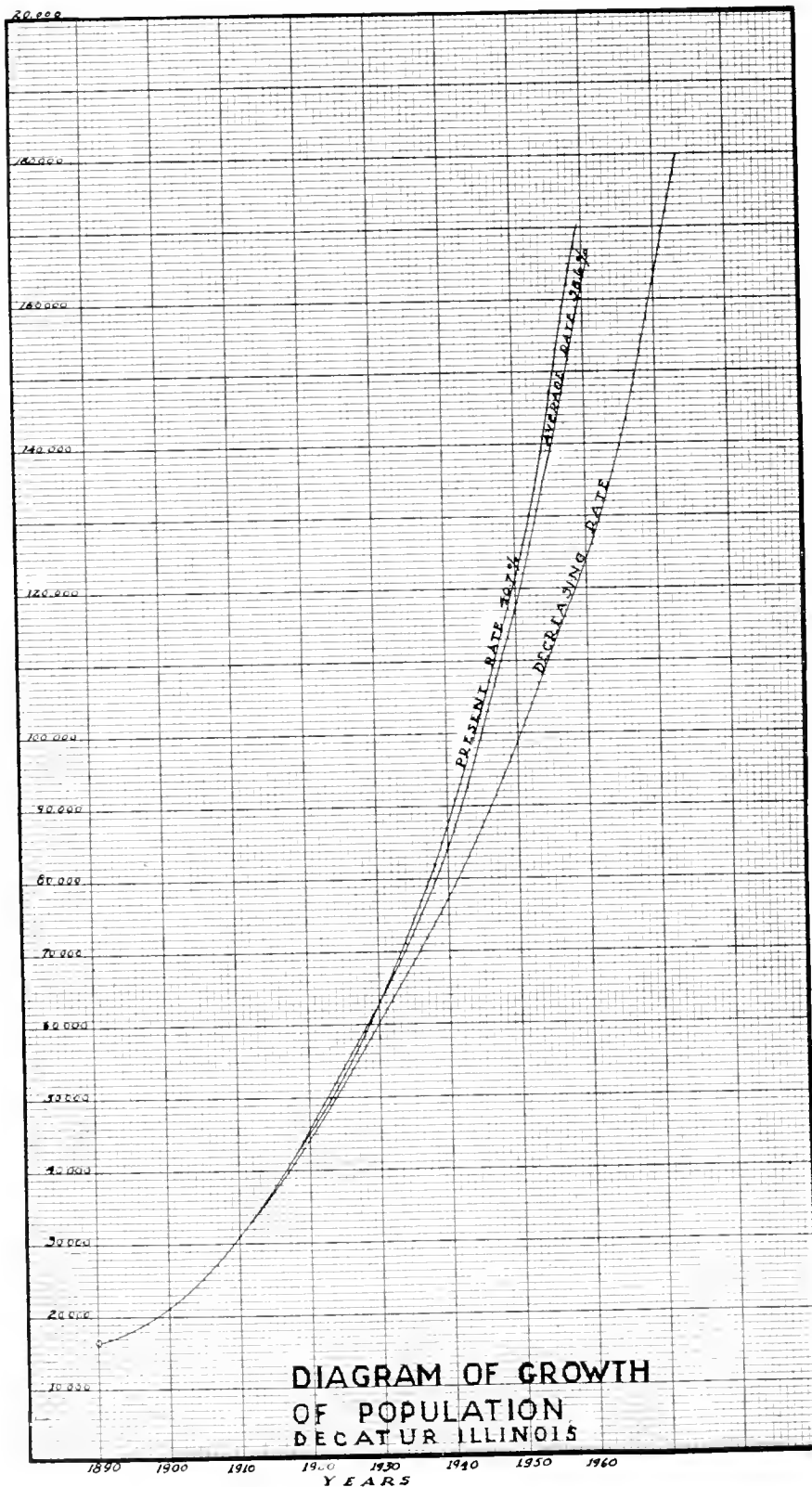
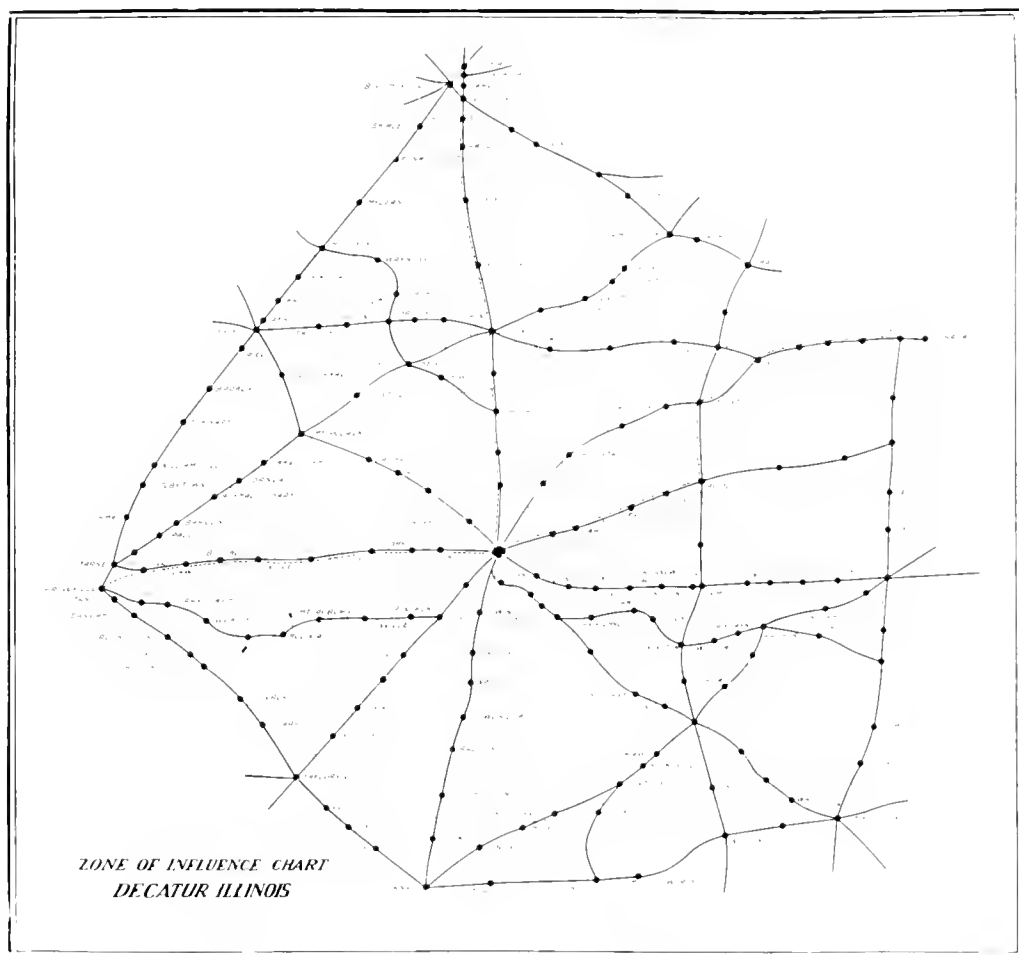


DIAGRAM OF GROWTH OF POPULATION

According to Decatur's present rate of growth, the city will reach a population of 150,000 in the year 1956.

The present rate curve corresponds closely with that of average growth since 1890.



ZONE OF INFLUENCE CHART

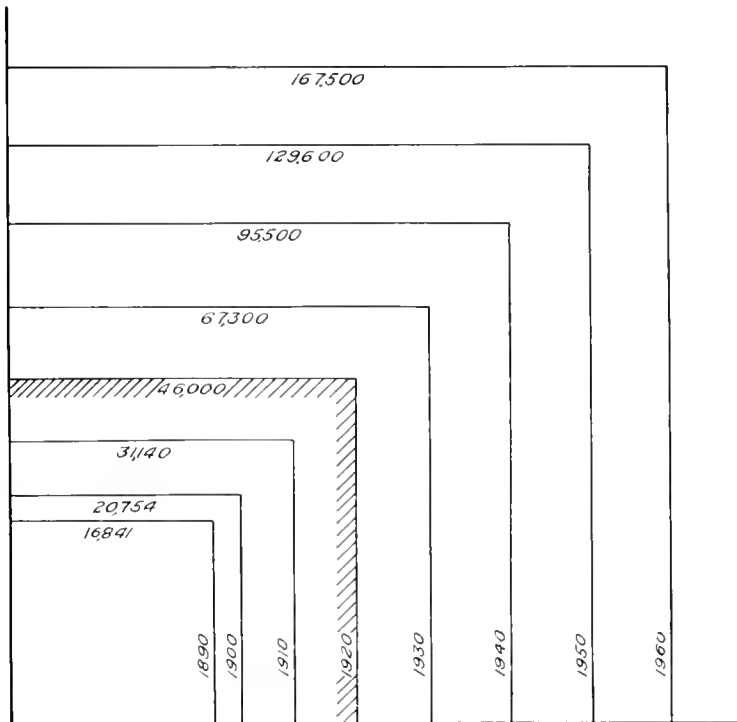
Decatur lies in the midst of a wonderfully fertile country, is admirably served by railroads and is tributary to a large and fast-growing population.

tages, in the way of labor supply, markets and goods.

Decatur's growth has never been phenomenal but always steady and constant, giving that stability which attracts the best class of investors. It is a kind of city the future of which may be reckoned with well nigh mathematical certainty.

Estimating the city's future growth from that of the last twenty years, Decatur will reach a population of one hundred fifty thousand by 1956 or the same population by 1957 based on the average growth of the city since 1890.

To take care of this additional one hundred thousand people which reasonably may be expected to live in Decatur during the next thirty-five years or within the lifetime of many of Decatur's present citizens, is the purpose of this plan. While this is the primary purpose, the plan will also present an orderly and scientific start from which the city may develop on indefinitely.



**CHART SHOWING ESTIMATED
DECENNIAL INCREASE IN AREA
OF DECATUR ILLINOIS**

The Motive and Scope of the Plan

THE MOTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE PLAN

THE city of Decatur at the present time occupies a plotted area of 4000 acres and a fairly well built up area of 3770 acres.

Railroads occupy 203 acres, industry 207 acres, trade 94 acres, parks 182 acres, schools 25 acres. There are 1800 acres built up to residences while the remainder of the 4000 acres is devoted to institutional grounds, scattered building sites and vacant town lots.

The population based on the area devoted to housing gives 16.1 persons to the acre and based upon the entire built up area of the city, gives a ratio of 11 people to the acre.

The comprehensive plan for the city as shown covers 20,000 acres including the 4,000 acres already plotted. Of this, 1,200 acres are set aside for industries, 500 for railroads, 2,700 for parks, 220 for schools, 500 for commercial expansion and an approximate total of 14,150 acres reserved for homes, which based upon a population of 150,000 would give an average of 10.6 people to the acre over the present and proposed housing district.

This report has been made to deal with Decatur's problems only, it not being deemed advisable to load its pages with the familiar and somewhat hackneyed examples of art in foreign and neighboring cities. While innumerable comparisons may be made with such outside examples, these are left for later discussions of the plan from the platform.

In arranging for the future city, all of the greater and many of the minor controlling factors have been kept in mind. Acting on the supposition that transportation and industry are fundamental, these problems have been worked out first and the city plotted to bring about a satisfactory balance between these features and the homes. The relationship between the homes and the parks, schools, local and outside transportation, business, etc., has been fully recognized.

In the matter of aiding industry, the main objects have been to establish a satisfactory location for a segregated factory district, to present a practical arrangement therefor, to bring into connection therewith all rail service and to furnish adequate provision for workingmen's home sites.

The problem of transportation has been dealt with broadly to

include the hauling of freight and passengers into and through the city to any point therein whether by railroad, electric cars, auto trucks or pleasure cars.

The street plan has been considered first from the standpoint of efficiency, second from the standpoint of economy of construction and maintenance and finally from the standpoint of attractiveness.

Parks have been considered as to proper location, desirable proportionate area to population and the utilization of such grounds as would be improper for housing.

A more comprehensive housing ordinance is urged, not so much to correct existing conditions as to guard the city from the mistakes out of which have arisen the deplorable congestion and the lack of sanitation, which are confronting other cities.

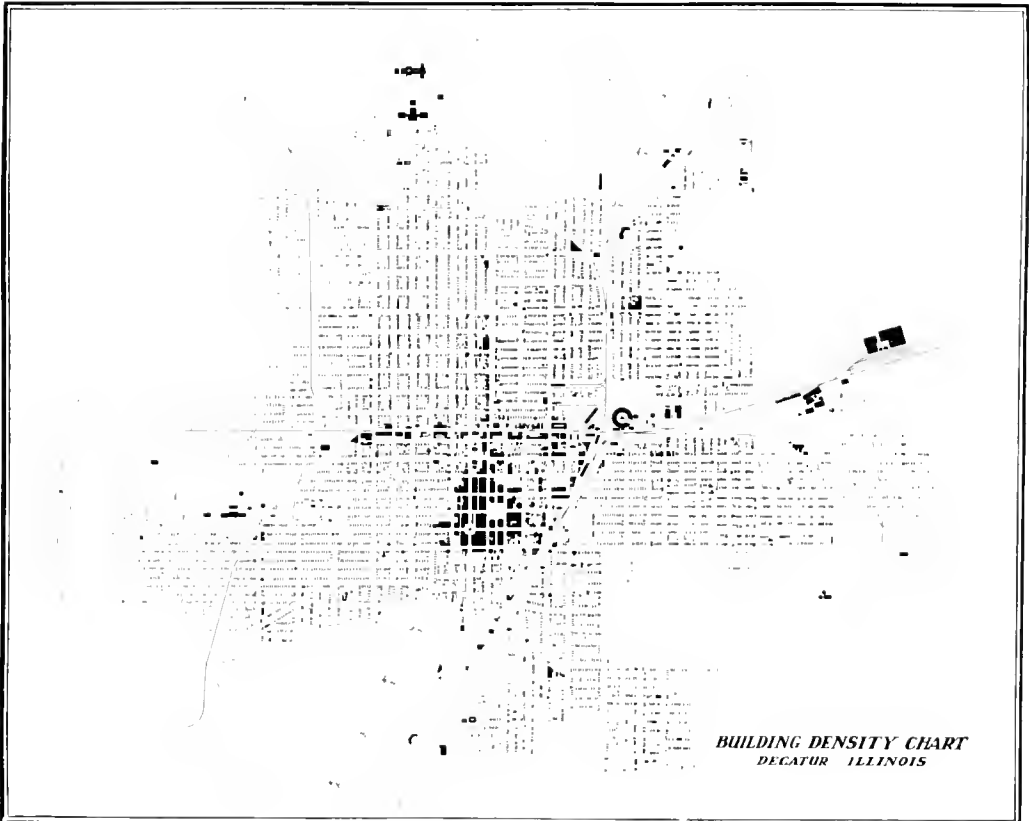
Only such changes in existing streets have been recommended as seem imperative now or ultimately. In some cases, although the need is not at this time pressing, delay will entail an increased cost out of proportion to the benefits to be derived from waiting.

The grouping of future public buildings into a harmonious and practical civic center is in line with all else in the plan. Whatever is worth building is worth building well and with every possible advantage carefully studied.

If the plan is founded on any one scheme it may be said that it is the scheme of zoning.

Like a well ordered house, a city should have a place for everything and have everything in its place. A machine fails to work if its parts are out of position and are therefore out of harmony. A city cannot be planned scientifically for industry, business, transportation and housing quarters unless it be known where these are to be located and within what zones they are to be, to a large degree, forced to remain.

The Decatur Plan must be considered as elastic and capable of change where changes may manifestly improve. If wisely made, however, changes will not interfere with the general structure of the plan, but will carefully fit into and co-ordinate with the main program.



BUILDING DENSITY CHART
Showing Trend of the City's Development

The Street Plan

Curved Streets

Railroad Diagonals

Alleys

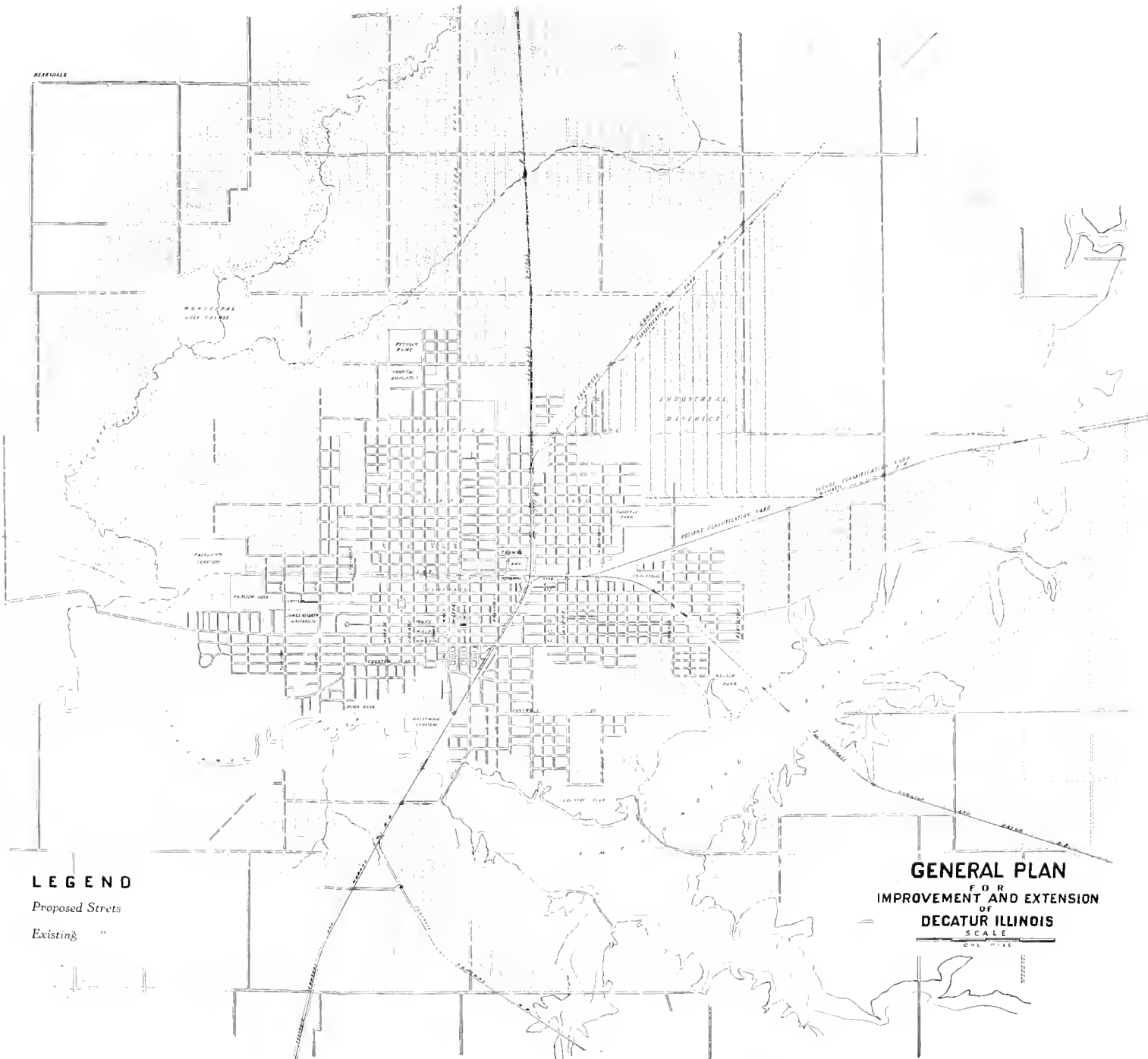
Special Street Corrections

Street Furnishings

Street Lighting

Street Paving

Street Ornamentation



THE STREET PLAN

THE street arrangement for future Decatur consists of a series of rectangular blocks laid out with their long axes toward the center of the city. Superimposed on these, are a limited number of diagonals approaching from various directions and extending as far toward the city's center as practical, without disturbing expensive improvements.

To the south along the river banks and westwardly where the land becomes broken, the straight streets divert to follow along the contours in long, graceful curves, but still keeping to a greater extent their continuity. Beyond the river and creek these curved streets lead into the main thoroughfares by which the waterways are crossed.

Rectangular blocks are plotted eight by fourteen to the mile with streets on half mile lines one hundred feet wide and intermediate streets sixty-six feet wide. This gives 20.5 miles of street to the square mile or twenty-eight percentage of the entire plotted area used in street surface. One hundred foot streets would be designed for fifty-six foot pavement, the sixty-six foot streets for twenty-four, twenty-six and thirty foot pavements depending on location.

Comparing this layout with a typical example of present street arrangement, as for instance, the section one-half mile west of Water Street and one-half mile each side of the Wabash tracks, there is shown a street area of 29.4% of the total, not including alleys. This is, of course, brought about by the short blocks and is in a measure excusable owing to the proximity of the business section.

The saving of 1.4% however involves a considerable total when applied to the entire area plotted in new streets. This saving would amount to \$809,000.00 for each square mile for street improvements and \$78,000.00 for each square mile for land saved (based on 20c. per sq. ft.), or a total of \$887,600.00 for each square mile. The total saving for the nineteen square miles involved would be \$16,864,000.00.

This amount would produce carrying charges in the way of interest and depreciation which, based on a population of 150,000 people, would give an annual per capita charge (taxes) of \$9.71.

As compared with the standard eight by sixteen block, the annual saving per capita would amount to \$7.07.

CURVED STREETS

A total of 5.1 square miles have been plotted with curved streets. All curved streets are designed for residence frontage. These streets would, in all cases, be sixty-six feet wide, although the pavement widths would vary according to the amount of through traffic to be expected by reason of their connections. In size, the blocks surrounded by curved streets would vary according to the nature of the topography. In general, however, these blocks would be somewhat larger than the standard rectangular block, of three hundred by six hundred feet, for the reason that the tendency is toward larger house lots and that these particular sections being naturally attractive would build up to finer residences, requiring more than the usual ground space.

In the matter of comparative costs, the curved street layout is of course much more economical than the standard rectangular arrangement owing not only to the smaller percentage of land used for street surface but to the greatly lessened cost in grading.

While the curved street system would obviously be impractical for general city planning where comparatively level ground is encountered, it is ideal for residence districts wherein exists broken topography. It secures a satisfactory relationship between the house lots and the street in regard to grade, in contrast to that obtained when streets are carried through with unrelenting precision as to line and grade.

A saving of \$1,808,000.00 to each square mile is shown in curved street sections as compared with the example mentioned. While compared with the standard plotting recommended, the curved street sections show a saving of \$261,000.00 to the square mile.

The eight by fourteen block system as compared with the usual eight by sixteen block system, while involving the same area in street surface to the square mile, offers the following advantages:

Main thoroughfares of ample width are provided beforehand and the cost and difficulty of later street widening will therefore

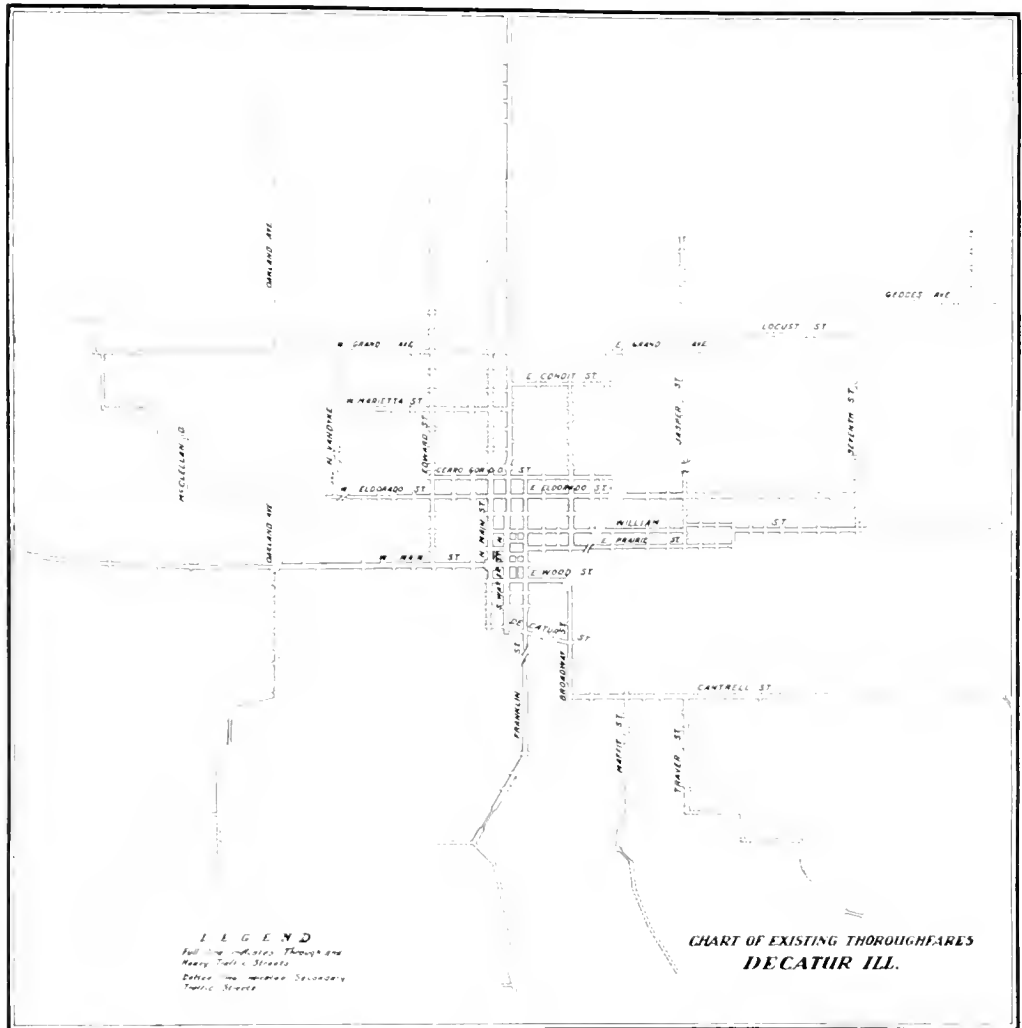


CHART OF EXISTING THOROUGHFARES
Showing Principal Streets of the Present City as Regards Traffic Volume

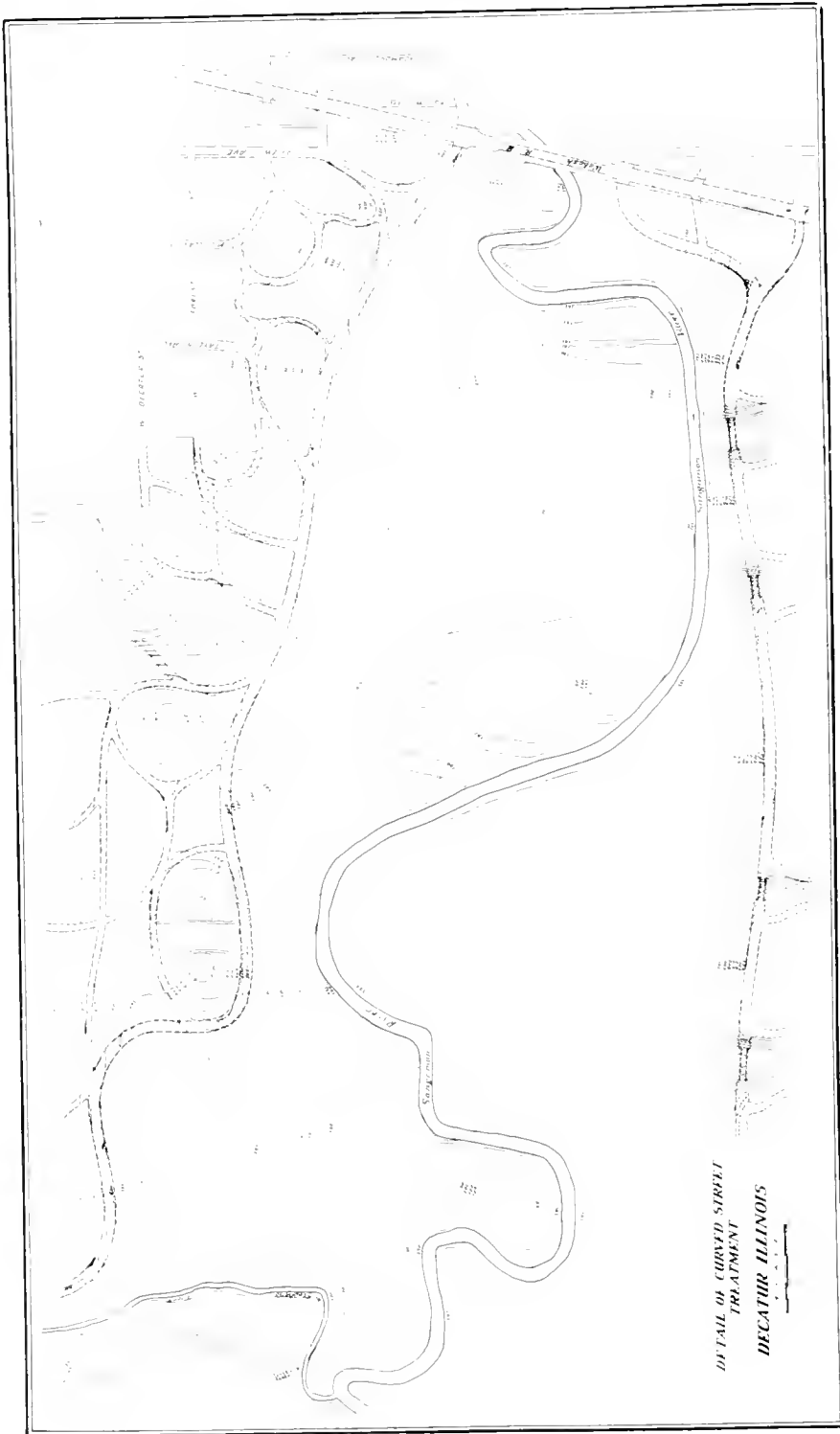
be obviated. These half mile streets naturally will become those upon which street car lines will be built, in which main sewer lines will be installed, and over which the heavier traffic will be carried.

Such streets would be fitted with heavy pavements, wide sidewalks and other equipment required for the use to which they will be placed. Diverting heavy traffic to these arteries makes for proportionately lighter traffic in the secondary streets. This in turn, enables the use of narrower and lighter pavements thereon, lessening cost and what is more important, giving greater privacy and freedom from danger on these secondary residential streets.

Diagonal streets are all treated as main thoroughfares and are proposed to be 100 feet in width. Where possible, these are paralleled on each side by a secondary street intended to carry light and faster moving traffic, to increase the spacing of crossings on the principal thoroughfare and to force back into the residential zone the triangular intersections. While these may be effectively used in houselots and for parking sites, they are extremely troublesome on a business street as they do not permit of the economical use of land for business structures.

RAILROAD DIAGONALS

For the reason that railroads usually approach cities directly from important outside points, it is nearly always desirable to carry streets on each side and parallel to their rights of way through the city. Such a plan has been proposed along the Illinois Central line which would become the line of the main group of railroads, and also along the Champaign branch and all lines leaving the main group outside of the city. The removal of the Peoria branch and of the St. Louis branch of the Wabash makes possible the use of these rights of way for streets. These should be widened to one hundred feet or at least to eighty feet.



ALLEYS

It is recommended that no alleys be used in residence districts. It is assumed of course that lot widths will be controlled so that access may be given to the back of lots. Block depths in all cases will permit of alleys, if in time any district should be used for apartment houses or business.

In the strictly residential sections, the alley has proven but an unnecessary expense, a collector of rubbish, a source of danger and disease and nearly always unsightly.

SPECIAL STREET CORRECTIONS

WIDENING OF BROADWAY FROM PRAIRIE TO WOOD

It is suggested to carry Broadway and Wood Street over the Illinois Central tracks by means of a double viaduct. With this accomplished, the importance of Broadway as a thoroughfare will be increased. Widened and unobstructed by railroad tracks, it will become an important by-pass street tending to relieve traffic pressure from the center of the city. Broadway will also be of added importance by reason of its connection with the proposed teaming yard and freight houses as well as with the Union Passenger Station.

STREET CHANGES IN CONNECTION WITH CIVIC CENTER

These are shown graphically in the civic center plan. Washington and Macon Streets thereby would be abolished from Main Street east to the railroad and would be replaced by a drive bordered plaza, leading through the public building group.

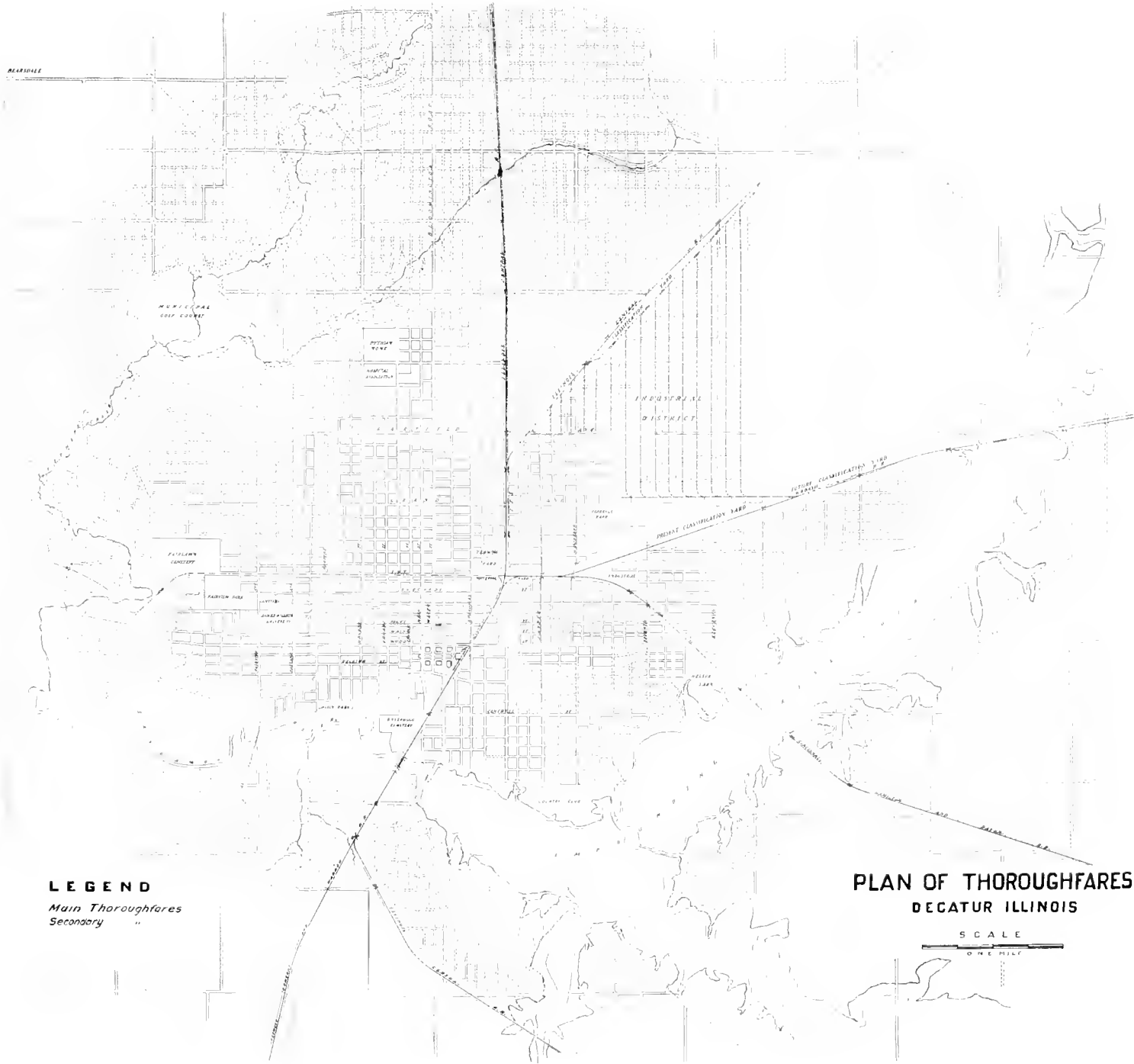
SOUTHWEST BOULEVARD AND PROPOSED STREET ARRANGEMENT IN VICINITY

Under the plan, a boulevard would be carried southwesterly from the intersection of Main and Decatur Streets, skirting Greenwood cemetery and making connections with the scenic drive leading along the bluff and skirting the lake. This boulevard would in turn be connected with Church, Union, Edward, Powers, Ewing and Monroe Streets.

The widening of Church Street from a point near Macon to the proposed drive is especially urged.

WABASH RIGHT OF WAY

As elsewhere mentioned in this report, this right of way should be used as a diagonal thoroughfare extending from Eldorado Street southwest and fixing the site of a drive bridge over the Sangamon. This right of way is one hundred feet in width with the exception of that portion lying between West Macon and Forest streets, where it narrows to fifty feet. This section should be widened to conform to the remainder of the right of way.



LEGEND
Main Thoroughfares
Secondary "

**PLAN OF THOROUGHFARES
DECATUR ILLINOIS**

SCALE
ONE MILE

CONNECTION OF JACKSON AND WARREN STREETS

The lack of a thoroughfare across the Wabash railroad on a line with Jackson Street creates a serious barrier to the north and south flow of traffic which is greatest in this locality. Although Franklin Street is used somewhat more, its connection with Warren Street would not be so direct.

The block between Central Street and the Wabash would have to be cut through from whence Warren Street would be carried to the east to connect with Jackson Street. Fortunately, no improvements of costly nature would stand in the way of this undertaking.

WIDENING OF MASON STREET

Mason Street from Water Street east to the Illinois Central should be widened to eighty feet. The increased traffic around the teaming yards would make this advisable.

VAN DYKE STREET

Van Dyke Street from Eldorado to Harrison will, under the plan, be freed from the railroad spur and electric belt line, although a trolley line will be located here in conformity with the proposed layout. With the railroad out of the way, Van Dyke Street may be made to take on quite a different aspect from the present.

We recommend its widening to eighty feet from the Wabash diagonal to the proposed diagonal leading to the northwest. By taking the railroad right of way and the tier of lots intervening, a thoroughfare one hundred eighty feet wide could be created. This could be center parked and made into one of the show streets of the city.*

GARFIELD STREET

Garfield Street should, in our opinion, be widened to eighty feet from the northwest diagonal through the factory district.

GRAND AVENUE

Grand Avenue, under this plan, will also become a first-class thoroughfare. It is at present normally sixty feet wide, but narrows down to forty feet between Union and Water Streets. Be-

*This suggestion is made to the owners of abutting property, but is not offered as a recommendation from a City Planning standpoint.

tween these points it should be widened to at least sixty feet and if it be deemed possible should be widened to eighty feet throughout its entire length.

UNION STREET

Under the plan, Union Street will make important connections with the through thoroughfare leading to the northwest beyond the Pythian Home. Union Street is one of the many which have been allowed to change their widths as extensions have been plotted and if it is to be made to handle considerable through traffic and assume the dignity of an arterial thoroughfare, timely consideration should be given to providing a uniform width between the railroad and Grand Avenue. It is now sixty feet wide between Grand and Garfield and seventy feet wide from this point to the hospital, where it is widened to ninety-four feet. We recommend a uniform width of seventy feet from Garfield to the hospital.

EDWARD, WOODFORD AND SEVENTH STREETS

These streets should ultimately be widened to eighty feet to permit of car lines without interfering with increased traffic.

FAIRVIEW AVENUE

Would, under the plan, be widened over a distance of three and one-half blocks.

OAKLAND AVENUE

Would be widened as shown for boulevard purposes.

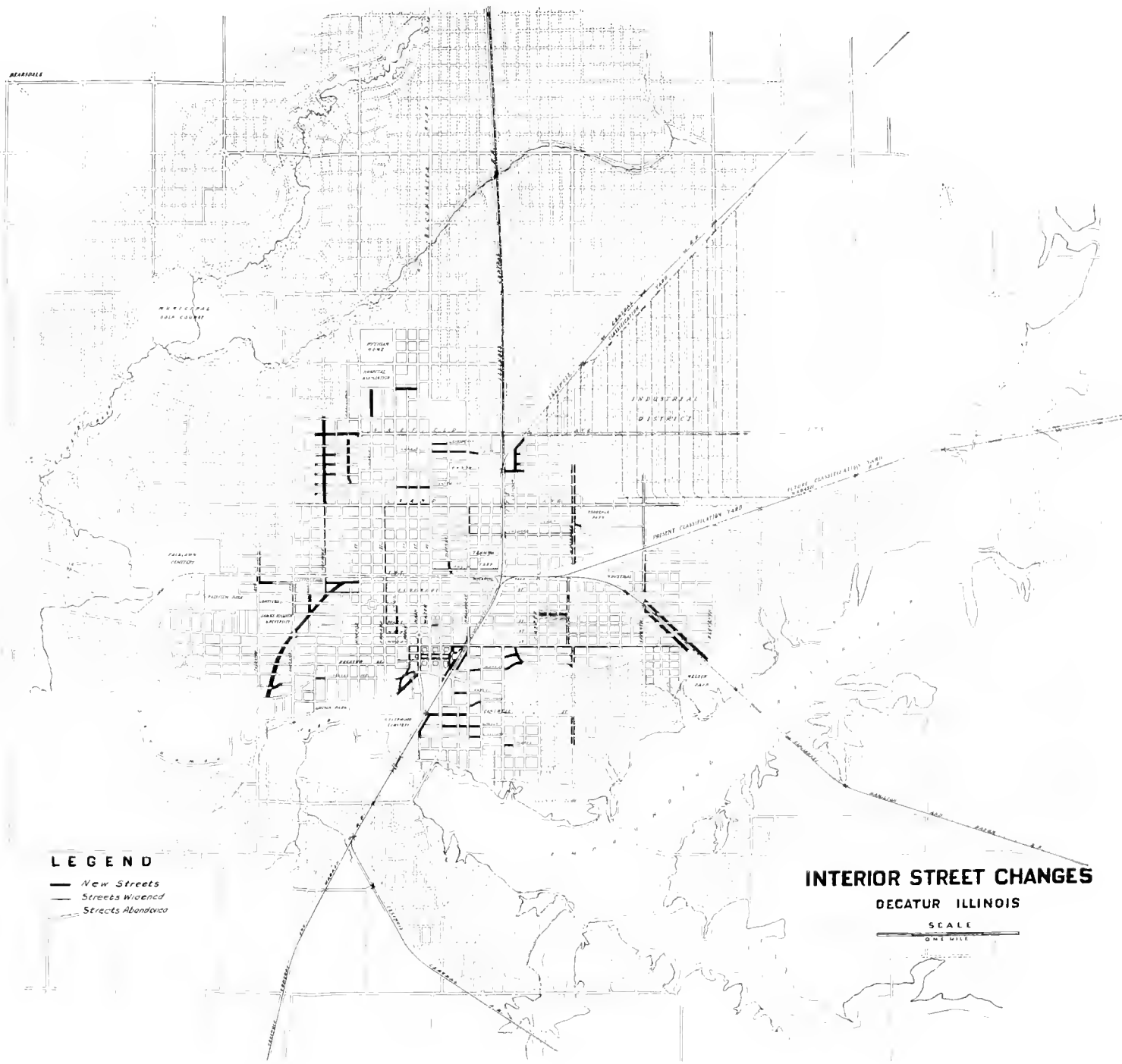
ORCHARD STREET

Would be widened to permit of better access to the freight yards.

In the plan, such widening is shown on one or both sides of streets as seems most feasible. In all cases above, widening may be probably best brought about by the set back of building lines.

CERRO GORDO STREET

Would be extended as shown between Monroe and Van Dyke Streets and further to the west to Fairview Avenue.



LEGEND

- New Streets
- - - Streets Widened
- ... Streets Abandoned

INTERIOR STREET CHANGES

DECATUR ILLINOIS

SCALE

ONE MILE

DUNHAM STREET

Would be carried through to connect with the proposed diagonal.

The following streets would be extended to form better connections and to permit of a better traffic circulation: Cottage Hill, Forest, John, Lawrence, Whitmer, Lincoln, Cleveland and Rogers.

The vacation of streets as shown in the vicinity of Nelson Park and the Country Club would be, as may be seen, for the better arrangement of blocks.

CENTER STREET EXTENDED WEST

The three blocks lying between Water and Union Streets north of Grand Avenue are abnormally long and bring about an obstruction to east and west traffic. This will become more and more serious as the city becomes larger. It is recommended that Center Street be carried through to Union Street as shown.

SUGGESTED PLOTTING NORTHWEST OF MONROE AND GARFIELD STREETS

This is shown in connection with interior street correction because it in some cases changes plotted but unimproved streets. Few, if any, improvements would be interfered with by these changes.

JOHNSON AND OLIVE STREETS

It is recommended that both Johnson and Olive Streets be opened through to Water Street. The latter street to be thus improved whenever made possible by the abandonment of the Peoria branch of Illinois Central.

REPLOTTING LAND CONTIGUOUS TO THE PROPOSED FACTORY DISTRICT

All plots of record in connection with land lying east of the east line of Torrence Park and north of Garfield Avenue have been overlooked in the proposed arrangement of the factory district. In addition, a plan of street arrangement has been suggested for all vacant land lying west and south as far as the Wabash and Illinois Central Railroads.

DIVISION STREET

It is proposed to extend Division Street east to Illinois Street, carrying same under the railroad and making possible an important thoroughfare, to give added accessibility to the factory district.

CALHOUN STREET

It is proposed to carry this street north to intersect with the diagonal extending along the railroad. This to be done whenever the industrial plants on land to the north will not be seriously interfered with.

WILLIAM STREET

One of the sad examples of the fallacy of trying to build streets without official control and a definite plan is illustrated by the jog in William Street between Jasper and East Streets. Not only was an important thoroughfare blocked and made inconvenient but an exceedingly poor lot division was brought about. There is no question but the best way out of the difficulty would be to expropriate all the land lying between the alley north of Prairie Street and North Street, carry William Street through on its original line and resell the lots arranged conveniently, for use.

The frontage of William Street is closely built up and such a plan would mean the wholesale moving of houses. Providing that by ordinance the erection of more costly buildings could be prevented, there would in all probability come a time when the present structures could be removed at an expense compatible with the benefits to be derived. If this district is allowed to be developed equally with other parts of the city, there may never come a time when the city government would consider this change financially possible.

On the other hand, to retard the development of the district by ordinance would of course immediately bring up the matter of damages due to property owners.

An alternative to the project of cutting William Street through on a straight line would be to round off the corners at Jasper and East Streets. This would necessitate the using of at least two lots at each end and again would not provide the widening of the short section of William Street which is after all of the most importance.

.....

This would, at best, be a makeshift, which has no place in a program of this character.

DIAGONALS ALONG THE C. H. & D.

It is proposed to carry a diagonal street on both sides of the C., H. & D. right of way from Eldorado Street southeast to the river, where a bridge crossing would be made on the west side of the tracks. This diagonal would serve the purpose of collecting traffic from the west to be carried across the river and from the east into town.

REPLOTTING OF DISTRICT SOUTHEAST OF WOOD AND SEVENTH STREETS

This suggested arrangement of streets is influenced by the broken topography which, together with the proximity to the golf club grounds, makes possible a desirable residential community.

ARRANGEMENT OF STREETS NORTH OF GOLF CLUB

Important in the proposed arrangement of streets for this section is the proposed diagonal connecting at Decatur and Maffit Streets, extending southeasterly and crossing the impounding lake at the present site of Lost Bridge. This would, in time, form an exceedingly important thoroughfare, tapping the country to the southeast and leading traffic into town over streets provided with subways under the railroads. The block arrangement for the remainder of this section north of the country club has been studied with the object in mind of providing suitable frontage and an economical use of land.

SOUTH SECTION OF THE CIRCULAR BOULEVARD

The proposed circular boulevard extending to the west from Lost Bridge Road is more important because of the fact that it passes through improved property. The boulevard would skirt along the north line of the country club, passing over the ravines immediately beyond, thence on through the district now known as "Oklahoma," which will be to a large extent inundated with the completion of the new dam, thence extending north along the

line of Garrison Street, it would pass to the north of the pumping plant, under the Illinois Central Railroad, along the crest of the slopes, through a woods and Lincoln Park, and finally would connect with the drive along Stevens Creek.

Only by walking over this ground and picturing the transformation which may be wrought in the character of improvements along the way, can a citizen of Decatur really understand the true purport of this benefit.

What is now Decatur's backyard will become a place of beauty. There is no questioning the fact that this is a project which would pay real dividends.

STREET FURNISHINGS

Perhaps no feature of the city, aside from the home, is more closely associated with the everyday existence of city dwellers than the streets. Being commonplace, their importance and possibilities are often overlooked.

Beautiful avenues in distant cities often provoke admiration and influence the creation of a home town boulevard which contrasts sharply with the ordinary streets within the city. There is really no reason why every street should not be as well treated as the so-called boulevard. As a matter of fact, practically every street has cost as much to develop as has the boulevard. The ordinary street has been given pavement, curb, gutter, sidewalks and generally, as many if not more, street trees than are bestowed on the boulevard; improvements have been installed more or less haphazardly but generally at quite as great expense. The boulevard may have been slightly better lighted but this feature may have cost no more per mile than the antiquated and ugly lighting of the ordinary street. Practically, the only difference between the ordinary street and boulevard is that the one lacks the uniformity and appropriate treatment of the other.

We do not want all our streets to be boulevards in the sense that they be built primarily for show. In fact, we may properly object to that exotic and rather pretentious term, but we have the right to expect that every street within the city be as attractive as may be made possible with the money available.

There are many things which enter into the proper furnishing of a street. Foremost among these are tree planting, lighting, paving and sidewalks. Special ornamentation which may include the introduction of statuary, fountains, little parkings and the like are important, and not the least in this consideration should come the matter of building line control, the treatment of front yards and indeed the facading of buildings.

Tree planting is especially important. There seems to be an inherent desire on the part of all property owners to plant trees, and they generally begin on the little bit of greensward lying between the curb and sidewalk. The work is prompted by a real desire to do something worth while, but results in starting on their way toward long years of growth, all kinds and varieties of trees,

of all sizes and manner of spacing, and showing that diversity which is to be expected when work of this kind is carried out by several thousand individuals. An equal amount of money expended for the wholesale purchase of suitable trees and the planting and care of these properly supervised would make a showing really worth while.

While a curved street with wide parkings may be suitably planted with informal groups of trees and shrubs, interspersed with perennials and other flowers, the ordinary straight street demands that formality of planting which is gained by uniformity of kind and size.

Trees should be selected with reference to their fitness to the particular street on which they are to be planted. Where the street is wide and the houses are well set back, the American elm, America's street tree par excellence, may be used. On narrow streets, with less room between the sidewalk and the buildings, such trees as the ash, Norway maple, American and European linden, gingko, etc., are better. In certain sections, smoke resisting trees should be used and the employment of flowering shrubs and special types of planting may be indulged in to fit special cases.

Street tree planting and care should be taken from the hands of individuals and placed in those of a competent authority, such as the city park commission, the commissioner of streets or a special tree committee, through which, in turn, the authority should be given to a trained and experienced arboriculturist.

The city should set aside annually a sufficient appropriation,



PARK AVENUE, DECATUR
A Well-Planned Street, With Houses Set Back, Giving Excellent Setting to Homes

and the work of spraying and pruning, planting vacant spaces along the streets, and cutting out dead or damaged specimens to present better spacing should be started and carried out systematically. The planting and care of trees by individuals should be allowed only by written permit by the city forester and under his personal inspection. What may be accomplished in ten years by this method can be seen in such cities as Buffalo, N. Y.; Springfield, Mass.; Hartford and New Haven, Conn.; Newark, N. J., and in many other cities throughout the country.

STREET LIGHTING

The lighting of streets in smaller cities has been to a considerable extent planned and executed by local electric companies. Occasionally the officials of these companies have been interested in procuring an artistic lighting scheme and have been willing to spend money necessary to do work out of the ordinary. Unfortunately, as a general thing, there has been no disposition other than to sell as many kilowatt hours as possible. High voltage lamps of a type which waste current are placed over street intersections and swing from ugly poles served by overhead wires.

The other extreme in lighting is the "Great White Way," popular of late years, concerning which the astute salesmen of patented and ornate electroliers are zealously interested in selling as many concrete or cast iron creations as possible. The result in the main has been forests of electroliers surmounted by twinkling clusters of lamplets.

It would be to the city's advantage to light all streets efficiently, artistically and economically. The whole city should be lighted from the viewpoint of providing safety and convenience to street users. As additions are built, the lighting plan should be ready to be followed without loss of time.

A special electrolier may be designed for the city's exclusive use. Overhead wires should be abolished on account of their unsightliness and danger and not only should this apply to high tension lines but to telephone and telegraph lines as well. With the improvement in types of underground installation, giving greater efficiency and lower cost of maintenance, we are fast approaching the time when every city can demand that the street be at last freed from the hideous lines of poles and maze of wires.

STREET PAVING

New types of pavement are being constantly developed and it would not be safe to advise a city for any such period as is represented by a city plan. The wise policy, which strangely enough is seldom followed, is, however, to use pavements fitted to the particular kind of traffic the street in question is to accommodate and to use this type, whatever it may be, continuously over the length of the street or until the character of traffic changes. Too often are heavy brick pavements placed on light residential streets and light asphalt pavements on heavy traffic streets.

STREET ORNAMENTATION

Throughout the city there are no end of opportunities for the little embellishments which go so far to reflect the true character of the community. These exponents of the city's culture cost little but do much to establish its good reputation.

During a period of years, many of these features may be expected to be given to the city. Little waste areas at street intersections which amount to little in property value may be made beautiful by plantings. Fountains, pergolas, Roman seats, statuary, properly designed flower beds, sun dials and the like are often donated by public spirited citizens, especially if it is known that these will be appropriately placed and maintained.

The city plan shows the way to provide opportunities for these embellishments in the street layout but the manner in which these shall be treated must depend upon the good taste of those from time to time in charge.

Industries

The Proposed Factory District
Scheme of Arrangement

INDUSTRIES

DECATUR'S industries are diversified in character. There seems to be no present indication that any one kind will greatly predominate. This of course, is desirable from the standpoint of giving greater stability of output and labor conditions. The city with diversified industries is more apt to weather hard times and to undergo constant and uniform growth than the one having but a single line of work.

The location of present factories is to some degree satisfactory. Those which are building up along the Wabash and the Champaign branch of the Illinois Central to the north and east, fit admirably with the suggested factory district.

By far the worse situation in regard to factory layout is that which exists along the Wabash right of way, west of the Illinois Central. Here a double row of factories, flanking the railroad, forms a veritable wall through the city's midst, cutting the business section in two and inserting in the very heart of the residential district the noise, smoke and other disadvantages, not the least of which is the switching of cars and the consequent interruption of traffic on intersecting streets.

While the location of factories to the south along the Illinois Central is to a measure unfortunate, these do not form the barrier that do those along the Wabash.

The policy of these recommendations is not to hamper in any way factories now existing in any part of the city. Industry wherever situated is too vital to the city's good to assume to destroy. Furthermore, it is not within the city's financial ability to remove existing plants (except on a comparatively small scale).

While it is necessary for the good of the city to give all possible aid to existing industries, at the same time it is in no wise incumbent on the city to encourage new plants to build up in places where they will be detrimental to their surroundings. The best way to discourage building in the wrong way is to encourage building in the right way.

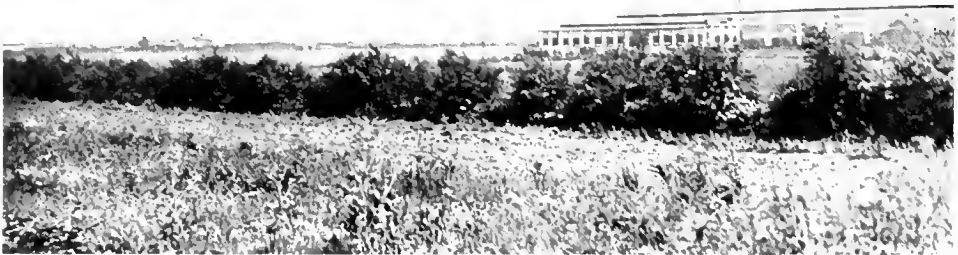
With this motive in mind, a segregated factory district has been planned with careful attention to benefits which may be given to future industries therein and to effects upon the community as a whole.

THE PROPOSED FACTORY DISTRICT

The location of the proposed factory district is to the northeast of the city beyond Woodford Street and lying between the Wabash railroad and the Champaign branch of the Illinois Central. The area is triangular in shape spreading out as it extends and giving practically unlimited room for industrial expansion. The land is high, well drained, and practically level. As attested by recent factory development, this location has the advantage of popular indorsement.

The present location of railroads makes the furnishing of ideal transportation to this area exceedingly easy to bring about. The Champaign interurban line runs through the tract. Logical extensions of the present street car lines would give necessary local transportation, which will be materially improved by the adoption of the general street car layout suggested.

The tract lies to the leeward of the city, thus the smoke will be carried away from the city instead of through it. The building of factories in this quadrant of the city leaves free from possible molestation the exceedingly fine locations for homes to the north, west and south. Altogether, the site suggested has, without question, advantages far outranking any other section around Decatur.



Railroad Shops and Industrial Plants Along the Wabash Railroad, East of the City, Showing Nature of Land Selected for Segregated Factory District

SCHEME OF ARRANGEMENT

The district comprising approximately one thousand acres has been laid out with rectangular blocks, measuring four hundred sixty by eight hundred feet, with the long axes north and south. East and west streets are one hundred feet wide on half-mile sections and seventy feet wide between. Half-mile streets north and south are one hundred feet wide with intervening streets sixty feet wide.

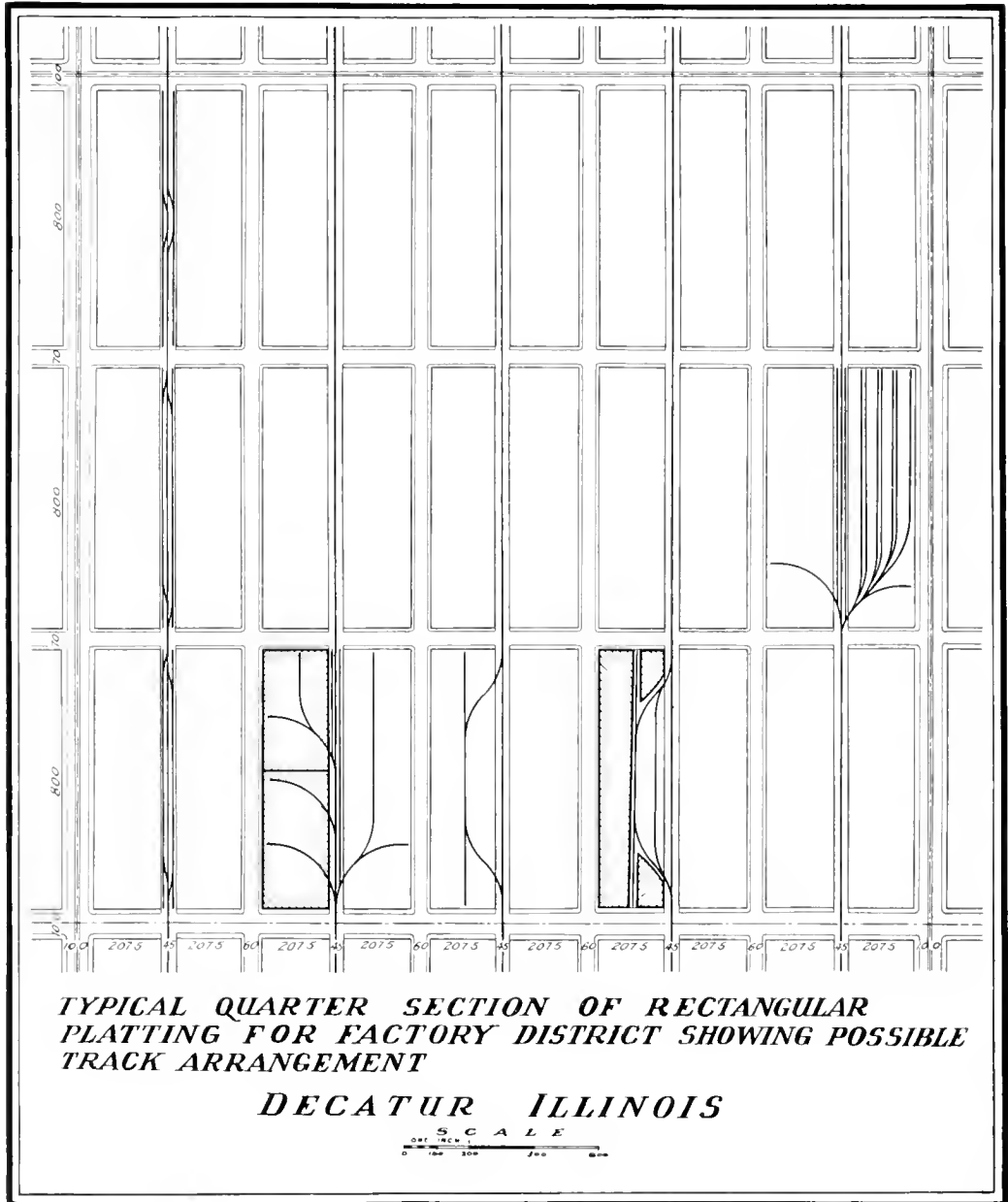
Railroad factory lines are carried through the middle of all blocks from north to south, each connecting with proposed classification and distribution yards along the Illinois Central and Wabash railroads. Thus, each factory line would become an interchange line by which freight may be received or delivered in either direction.

Factory switches or spurs may be taken from these running lines as found most convenient and whether only a portion of a block or a series of blocks is needed for a plant, ample freight facilities are given. The wide east and west streets make possible an easy approach to the team tracks and freight terminal for broken car load shipments.

By the arrangement given 79.2% of the area is available for factory purposes, only 20.8% being used for streets and railroads.

While the area shown as plotted in streets would in all probability accommodate a city of over 150,000 people, it is recommended that in the event of passing a zoning ordinance, the entire area shown here for industries be kept free from permanent buildings other than factories and limited to those needed for farms, market gardens and the like, and that no street plotting be accepted which does not conform to that best suited to the industrial district. This would reserve all suitable land as far as the river in the direction indicated.

The reason generally accepted as sufficient for the segregation of factories is that thereby homes may be protected. There seems to be good and sufficient reason why established home districts should be protected against the encroachment of new industries which many times change the character of the neighborhood and depreciate the value of home improvements. In some instances this does not hold true and in many instances there is a quickened



sale at raised prices of nearby vacant property. This is of course only apt to be true when the district in question is but poorly built up and with a cheaper grade of homes. Many a fine old home section has been robbed altogether of its character and forced into a tenement district by the advent of the factory. Thereby has the development of years been destroyed, the sentiment of the ancestral home lost and the associations which go to make for better city relations broken up.

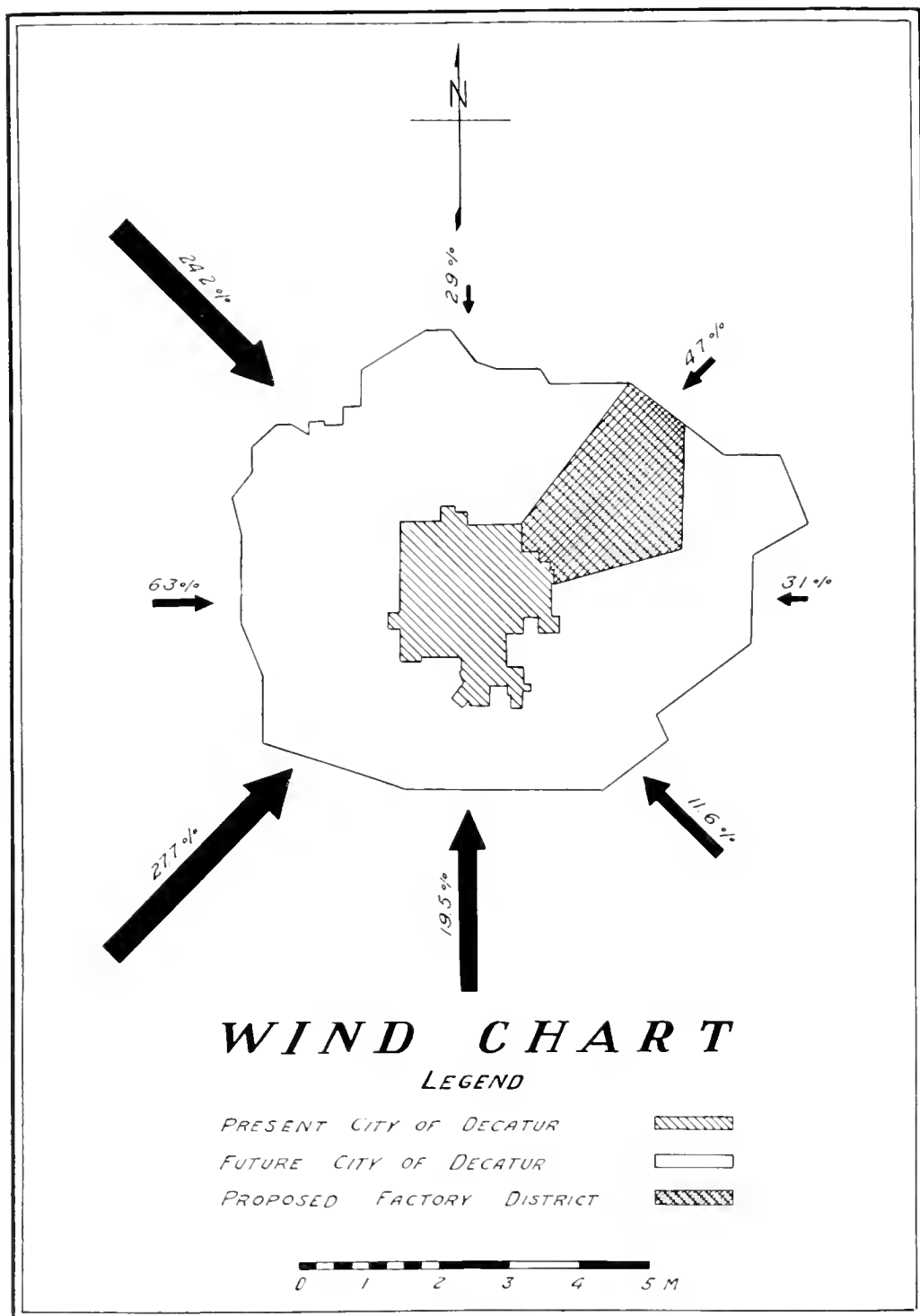
But figuring from the standpoint of city planning economics, a still more potent reason may be advanced for factory segregation, namely, that the factory itself may be protected. Inasmuch as the existence of the home is largely made possible by the existence of the factory, the protection and encouragement of the latter may be considered of paramount importance.

Existing factories are being constantly hampered in their extensions. Generally starting with but small resources and unmindful of the possibilities of the growth of its business, only enough land is taken by the new company at first to fulfill immediate needs. The plant becomes circumscribed by homes, which later have to be removed for the plant's extension. This is costly and must be paid for out of the product manufactured. The result is to the advantage of competitors whose plants may expand at less expense.

An area kept free from other kinds of improvements gives opportunity for expansion of unit industries without increased cost other than that equal to the carrying charges of the property or to its natural enhancement in value.

A district held solely for factory purposes and properly arranged for such use, insures adequate and uniform railroad service, a feature of the greatest importance. Many established industries are forced to move to other cities and many are kept from going to the city of their choice because of the lack of available trackage or the difficulty of handling cars over the various railroads within the city. Added to this is the constantly growing difficulty in obtaining switching service, especially where grade crossings are caused.

The practice of building factories along the main railroad lines has in the past had the disadvantage of placing the manufacturer



WIND CHART

From the above chart it will be noted that the prevailing winds are from the south and southwest. Therefore the location of the factory district to the northeast of the city would be preferable from the standpoint of smoke.

somewhat at the mercy of the railroad company. This is guarded against and much saving of time and expense brought about by the location of factories on independent lines leading into general classification and distribution yards, connecting in turn with all railroads of the city.

Much aid is to be extended to the city's industries by reserving land topographically suitable. The practice of building along main lines often forces plants down into depressions or up on hills where it is difficult to secure switch service and where again the cost of plant extension is increased.

The best possible physical relation is needed between the factory and the home section wherein live the operatives. This may be best provided by factory segregation, the suitable development of a nearby workingmen's home district and by a scientific arrangement of connecting streets and car lines. The factory district gives opportunity to build public service in a fitting manner. Streets may be paved with heavy teaming in mind. Water supply, sewers, etc., may be built to meet known requirements. Thus factories may be better served while on the other hand a lighter and less expensive series of improvements may be installed in the residential district.

Not only does such a factory district aid established industries but by the same token, it aids the city to secure new ones, and herein of course lies the very crux of city progress.

The Railroad Problem

Special Elevation of Roads

Special Relocation of Routes

The Union Station

Freight Yards

Summary of Railroad Change Benefits

THE RAILROAD PROBLEM

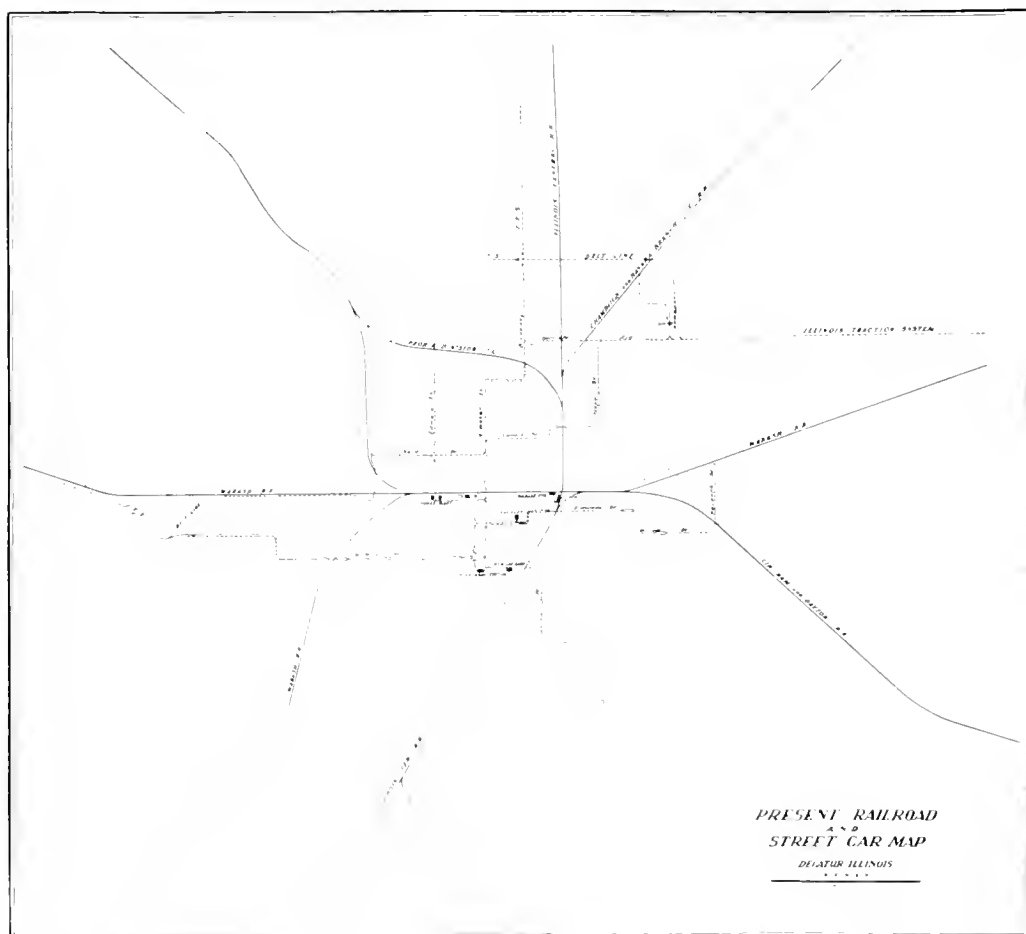
IN SOLVING a railroad problem in connection with the city plan, two view points have to be considered. First, as regards benefiting to the greatest extent the city, and second the railroads themselves.

It is usual for towns to be located on existing railroads and it would therefore seem that the railroad first being on the ground, should have the right of way and the town should adapt itself to conditions. The growth of new towns is largely dependent upon new railroads being built, thus giving better connections with outside communities. So eager have new towns been to secure railroad lines that few obstacles have been placed in their way and they have been allowed to enter and leave about as they saw fit.

As a city grows larger and more important, however, the aspect of the case is altered. Then it comes to pass that railroads need the city as badly as the city needs the railroads, and with the advent of new lines, the city finds itself in the position to dictate as to location of rights of way, stations, freight yards, etc.

When a city acquires a population of twenty or thirty thousand, it becomes a corporation of considerable importance; its railroads bear the same relation as its street car lines, interurban lines and, in fact, its streets; they are a part of its physical structure and their arrangement as to location, grades, etc., becomes of tremendous importance with relation to the growth of the city both from the standpoint of rapidity and direction. The city becomes a factor of larger consequence than the cost involved in rearranging lines within its limits, whereby less danger and greater convenience to the inhabitants may be brought about.

On the other hand, railroad rights of way have been granted by state or government legislation or by exercising the right of eminent domain. It is therefore a difficult undertaking to change these rights of way. Again, the rivalry between lines and the natural jealousy thereby arising have caused railroad companies to fight tremendously against the unification of rights of way, stations and the like. It is therefore necessary to show a saving in dollars and cents in operation charges and maintenance to make

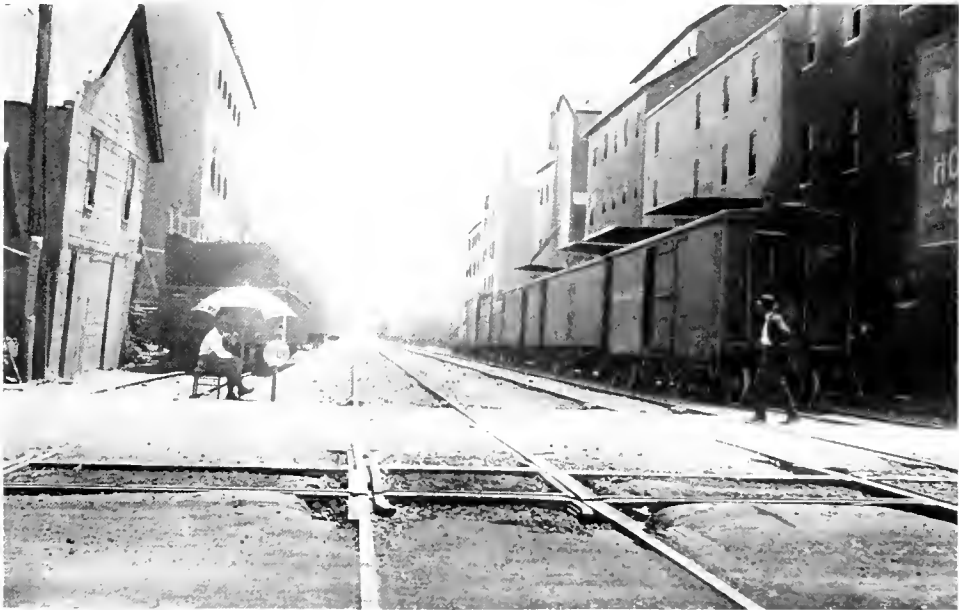


these suggested changes forming a part of the city plan attractive to the railroad companies.

The period which we are just going through, involves a further item of difficulty. At present the roads of the country are in a chaotic condition. Railroad building has dropped to practically zero, railroad stocks are at a low ebb and the billion dollars a year necessary for the development of railroads to keep pace with the growth of the country is by no means forthcoming. At the present time it is obvious that sweeping changes where they can be gotten along without, will be, for a while at least, extremely difficult to achieve.

There is, however, the fact that the advantages of railroad co-ordination for the purpose of lowering overhead costs and bringing about greater efficiency has been demonstrated. There is the fact that railroad companies as well as the general public are at last seeing these benefits of co-ordination.

There is a probability that in the future, there will be at least partial government control which will tend to encourage the harmonious working together of different lines and above all, there has come to pass an established precedent that large communities



Factory District Along the Wabash Railroad



Another View of Factory District Along the Wabash Railroad

have the right to demand that the physical arrangement of railroad lines shall be of such a nature as to at least not endanger life and limb.

It has been established that a city has the right to demand that railroad crossings shall be freed from danger and this has brought about all over the country, and especially through the west, the comprehensive elevation or depression of tracks for the purpose of traffic separation.

Decatur is well served by railroads. Ten lines approach the city from as many different directions and meet at a common point. This advantage of directness is, however, seriously offset by the disadvantage of having the city cut to pieces by the series of railroad lines.

First of all, this condition necessitates a large number of street crossings, each one of which is a serious menace. Again it leads to the development of factories along the rights of way which penetrate in all directions areas needed for homes. There is no question but that this has a marked detrimental effect on the residence districts, introducing, as it does, noise, smoke and danger in close proximity to the homes, with the consequent depreciation in property values.

It might be assumed that the roads leading into and through the city can be forced to elevate their tracks and therefore do away with the first danger, namely that to the city's traffic. This would, however, not do away with the disadvantage of having the lines

penetrate the home districts. It would furthermore bring about a confusion in switching to existing industries. The elevation or depression of lines would entail engineering difficulties of a serious nature and there would result a series of ugly embankments or cuts.

The roads approaching the city from the south and west cross the Sangamon River and Stevens Creek over bridges at such a grade as to cause a sharp rise into the city. Elevating the tracks would therefore bring about additional grades which would be impractical unless the bridges were raised and elevations carried some distance beyond these waterways. Depression of tracks in the first place would be extremely expensive and would complicate matters with relation to existing industries, railroad shops, etc. In connection with the main line of the Illinois Central tracks depression would also destroy the several existing street underpasses.

For purposes of comparison, four possible solutions to the Decatur railroad problem have been analyzed.

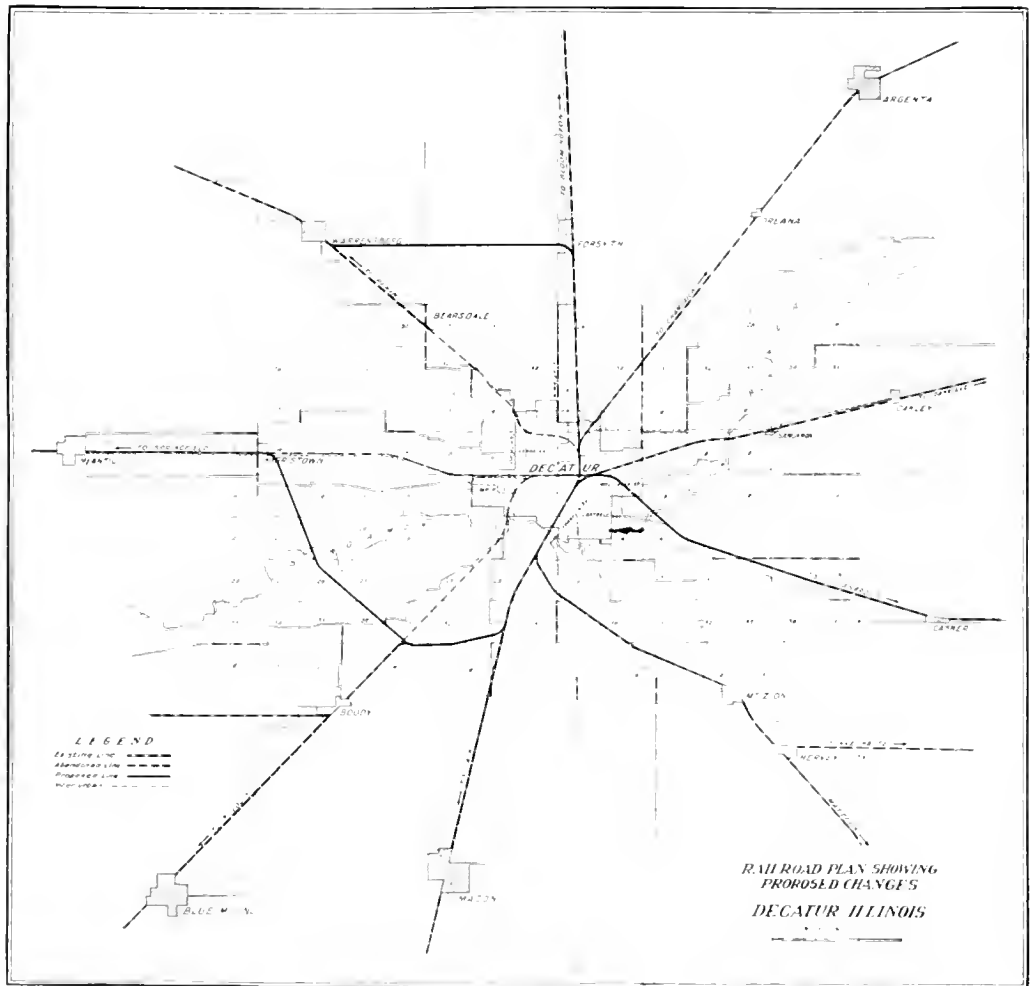
1st—Elevation of the Wabash Railroad from Jasper Street west and of the Illinois Central from Prairie Street north.

2nd—Relocation of the St. Louis division of the Wabash to come in over the Kansas City Branch.

3rd—Relocation of the St. Louis Division to come in over the Illinois Central.



At Millikin University, Where the St. Louis Branch of the Wabash Traverses One of the City's Best Residential Sections, With the Inevitable Result



4th—Relocating both the St. Louis and Kansas City divisions of the Wabash to come in over the Illinois Central and the diverting of the Peoria Branch of the Illinois Central east to meet the main line beyond the plotted area.

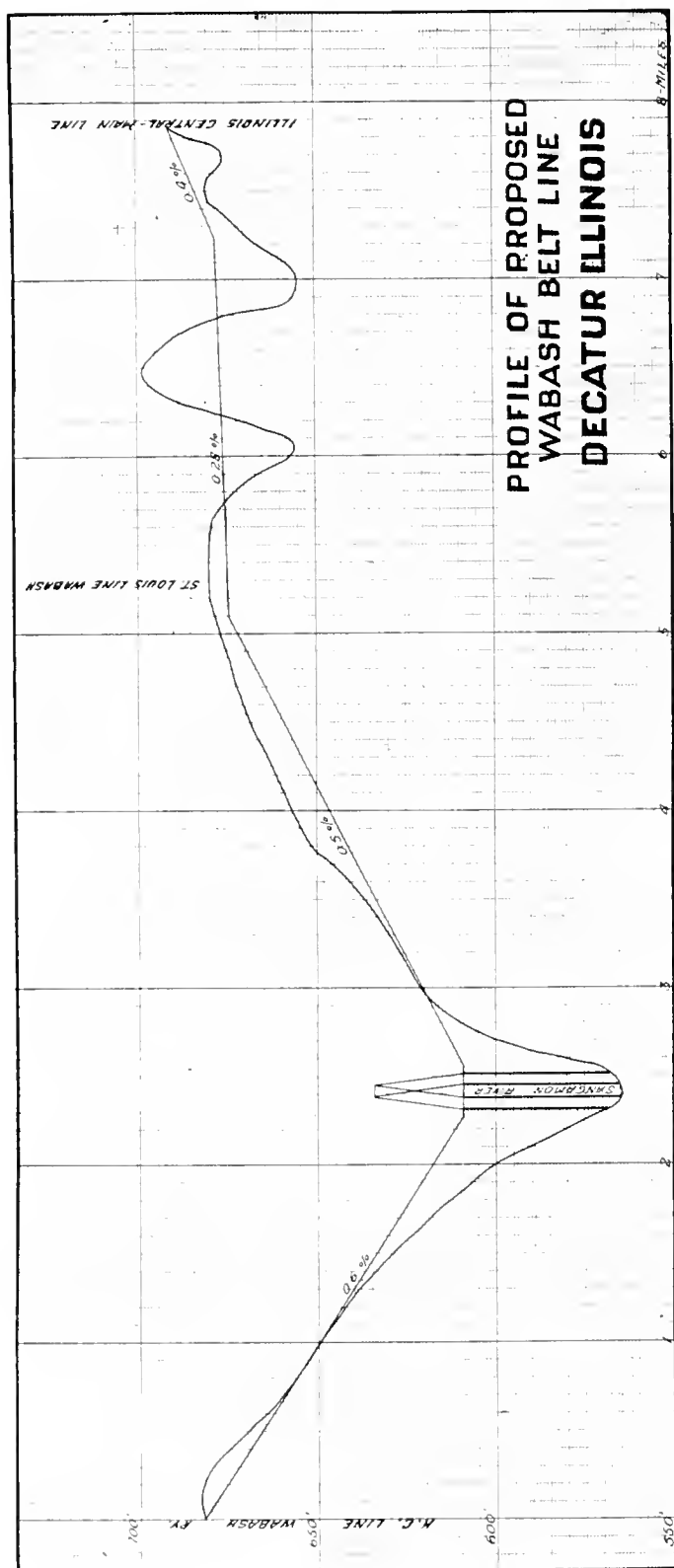
ELEVATION OF THE WABASH RAILROAD WEST OF THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL TRACKS

This would include the Kansas City and St. Louis branches as far as the river and Stevens Creek. Its advantage would lie merely in the separation of grade crossings.

The chief disadvantage from the city standpoint would be the difficulty of serving the present factory district. According to tables following, it will be seen that the cost of elevation would be \$1,405,850.00, against which may be charged the item of \$250,000.00 for a new Sangamon River bridge as repairs and renewals, leaving a net charge for the improvement of \$1,155,850.00. The cost of the elevation of the Illinois Central is not included in the above figure. There would in addition be heavy damage claims from property owners, especially from Monroe Street east, which are not included in the estimate.



Three Trains at Once On One of the Crossings of the Wabash—the "Chinese Wall" of Decatur



PROFILE OF PROPOSED WABASH BELT LINE

Above profile shows possible grades to be secured in carrying the Kansas City branch of the Wabash around the city to connect with the main line of the Illinois Central.

RELOCATION OF ST. LOUIS DIVISION TO COME IN OVER THE KANSAS CITY BRANCH AND ELEVATION OF THE KANSAS CITY LINE

This would involve \$900,000.00 for track elevation in addition to cost of the belt line of the St. Louis branch at Boody, which would add at least a half million dollars, making the total cost more than that for complete elevation. Items of property damage would also enter into this project.

If either of these projects are carried out, the location of the Union Station at the Illinois Central crossing would be the only feasible plan. This location is already congested due to yards, industry tracks, freight houses, etc., and is disadvantageous from the point of convenient and uninterrupted operation of trains.

RELOCATION OF THE ST. LOUIS DIVISION TO COME IN OVER THE ILLINOIS CENTRAL

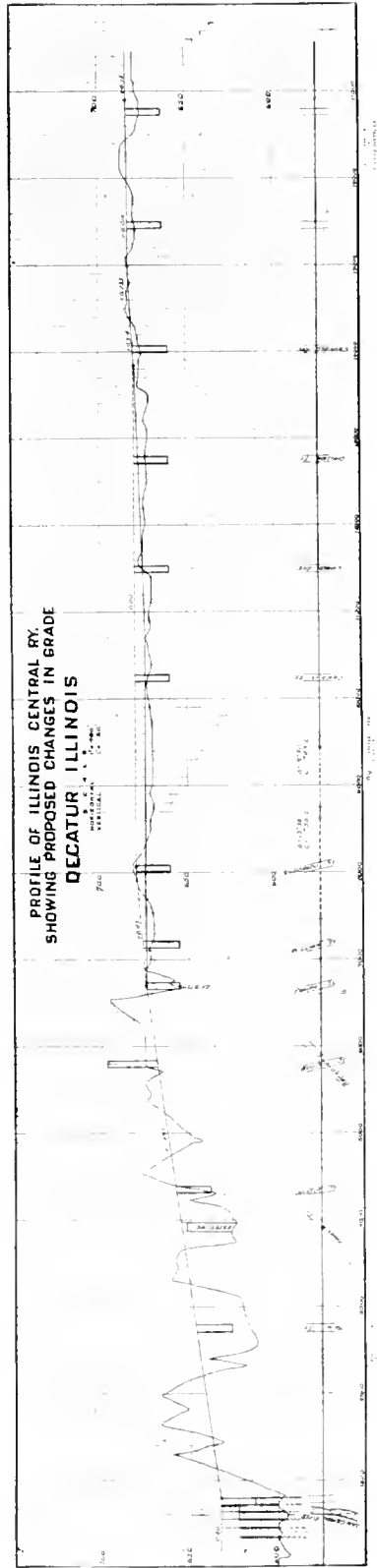
This scheme, while diverting the double line traffic of the St. Louis branch from the present factory district and residential district to the southwest, involves the most expensive part of the cut off and still leaves the problem of the Kansas City branch unsolved.

The final solution, that of relocating both the St. Louis and Kansas City branches as well as the Peoria branch of the Illinois Central brings about the following advantages:

In the first place, it would relieve the western section of the city entirely from railroads except for a freight switch to serve the present factory district. This section of the city while on account of the topography is not adapted to manufacturing, is for the same reason most desirable for residences.

Approaching the city, all roads would pass over the Illinois Central right of way, which is of ample width. Already several important street crossings on the Illinois Central have been separated and it would be comparatively easy to separate others.

The three branches to the east, namely the Champaign, Danville and Indianapolis lines, are not a serious menace. The first two named would bring about a convenient arrangement for the proposed factory district and in fact could not be planned better



PROFILE OF ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILWAY, SHOWING PROPOSED CHANGES IN GRADE

The above profile shows the proposed method of eliminating grade crossings through the city on the Illinois Central main line.

as to alignment for this purpose. The C., H. & D. line goes through a small section of the city to the southeast and will in time be more serious to the city. This line could be carried to the north and across the present Wabash bridge over the Sangamon, thence through the city over the Wabash tracks. This change, however, is not urged for the present.

The Kansas City branch, according to this plan, would leave the present location just east of Harristown and swinging southeast by the belt line would join the St. Louis division at a point about two miles from Boody. From this point, it would combine with the St. Louis branch swinging northeast and joining the main line of the Illinois Central.

The disadvantage of course in this scheme lies in the fact that the Kansas City traffic would be diverted from a straight line and the distance to the city increased by nearly five miles. If this were a trunk line like the St. Louis division, this change would be serious. In many instances, however, railroad lines have been diverted in this way to bring about better connection to the city and we believe that the advantages would far outweigh the disadvantages.

As to the item of cost, there would be in the first place, no damages to pay to abutting property owners. The total cost of the improvements would be approximately \$1,116,100.00. Renewals, repairs and other credits, would amount to \$741,250.00, leaving a net improvement charge of \$374,850.00.

This change would eliminate 23 grade crossings, in addition to the many extra crossings that would ensue in the development of the city up to the point designed by the city plan. The present annual cost of guarding a grade crossing may be conservatively placed at \$2,600.00 or a total of \$59,800.00 a year for these 23 crossings. This amount capitalized at 5% would amount to \$1,196,000.00, or in other words, more than three times enough to take care of the net cost of the improvement.

At present ten of these crossings are guarded, which on the above basis would be equivalent to \$520,000.00, or more than the cost of the improvement.

In the case of the Peoria branch of the Illinois Central, there would be involved in the construction, \$210,000.00 against which



The Illinois Central Right of Way Gives Ample Width for the Proposed Main Group of Railroads Through the City

could be charged credits amounting to \$102,850.00, bringing about a net improvement charge of \$107,150.00. This change would eliminate 12 grade crossings which if properly guarded would accrue a yearly expense of \$31,200.00. The amount of this saving capitalized at 5% would be \$624,000.00.

RAILROAD CROSSING ELIMINATION

It is proposed to raise the main line of the Illinois Central six feet from Prairie Street to Eldorado, thence extend on level grade to Springfield Avenue, where it would meet the present grade. This would cost about \$75,000.00 plus bridges and subways for main line work and would give subways at William, Eldorado, Orchard, Grand, Division and four proposed streets beyond to the north. In addition there would be subways at Prairie, Decatur, Franklin, and South Main Streets on two river drives and on two proposed streets to the south. An overhead combined crossing would serve Broadway and Wood Street.

The Wabash line would be raised two feet at Jasper Street and up to new grade of the Illinois Central. Subways would be provided at Jasper, Woodford, Seventh and Eleventh Streets with three additional on proposed streets beyond.

Seven subways would be installed along the Champaign branch of the Illinois Central.

On the C. H. & D. subways would be placed at Eldorado, Seventh and North William, overhead crossing at Wood Street with three additional subways to the east.

Three subways are provided on the Mattoon Branch of the Illinois Central.

The above gives a total of forty subways and three viaducts.

TABLES OF ESTIMATES, ALTERNATE RAILROAD PROJECTS

Cost of Track Elevation for Wabash Railroad from Decatur Junction East

9,500 ft. of retaining wall	@ \$27.50	\$ 261,250
150,000 yds. fill	@ .50	75,000
15,000 yds. ballast	@ .80	12,000
25,000 ft. track taken up and relaid.	@ .60	15,000
7 bridges	@ 30,000	210,000
2,000 ft. raised east of I. C.		20,000
Temporary structures		150,000
Total from Junction east		<u>\$ 743,250</u>

From Decatur Junction to Sangamon River

14,000 ft. track taken up and relaid.	@ .60	\$ 8,400
Ballast		10,000
260,000 yds. fill	@ .50	130,000
4 Bridges	@ 20,000	80,000
Temporary Structures		10,000
Total from Junction to Sangamon River.		<u>\$ 238,400</u>

South from North End of Sangamon Bridge

Sangamon River Bridge and raising.	\$ 250,000
7000 ft. track taken up and relaid	@ .60 4,200
Ballast	5,000
80,000 yds. fill	@ .50 40,000

Total from North end Sangamon Bridge	\$ 299,200
Total St. Louis Division	1,280,850
Kansas City Division Decatur Jct. West	125,000
Grand Total	<u>\$1,405,850</u>
Credit Sangamon Bridge	<u>250,000</u>
Net improvement charge	<u>\$1,155,850</u>

Illinois Central Railway Warrensburg to Forsyth

6 miles main line	@ \$35,000	\$210,000
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Credits

4.7 miles renewal items single track	@ \$15,500	\$ 72,850
Right of way abandoned		30,000
Total credit		<u>\$ 102,850</u>
Net improvement charge		<u>\$ 107,150</u>
Save 12 grade crossings, capital charge at 5% on \$26000 per year		<u>\$ 624,000</u>

Cost of Cut Off St. Louis Division Alone

2.5 Miles New Double Track	@ \$48,500	\$ 121,250
4.3 Miles Additional Double Track along I. C.....	@ 39,500	169,850
Extending 4 subways	@ 10,000	40,000
Half of viaduct		100,000
Widening Sangamon Bridge		175,000
Grading		90,000
Interlocker and tower		20,000
Total		<u>\$ 716,100</u>

Cost of Cut Off Kansas City Line to St. Louis
Line Junction

5.5 miles single track	@ \$30,000	\$ 165,000
Grading		90,000
Sangamon River Bridge		125,000
Interlocker tower		20,000
Total		<u>\$ 400,000</u>
Total cost of entire Cut Off		\$1,116,100

Credit

Rail renewal 6.3 miles double track	\$81,900	
Ties 6.3 miles double track	66,150	
Spikes and fastenings 6.3 miles double track	9,450	
Laying of new steel and ties and relaying 6.3 miles....	37,800	
		\$ 195,300
New double track Sangamon Bridge		225,000
Rail renewal 6.4 miles single track	41,600	
Ties 6.4 miles single track	33,600	
Spikes and fastenings 6.4 miles single track	4,800	
Laying new steel and ties and relaying	19,200	
		99,200
12.7 miles block signal apparatus		31,750
Interlocking tower at Decatur Jct.		20,000
K. C. Branch right of way.....		50,000
St. L. Branch right of way		120,000
Total credit		<u>\$ 741,250</u>
Net improvement charge		374,850

THE UNION STATION

If this plan is adopted, a Union Station in place of two or more stations would be so obviously desirable as to in all probability be insisted upon by the municipality.

It is not necessary to go into the matter of the Union Station from the standpoint of railroad economics. The advantages to the traveling public are equally obvious. Added to these is the fact that the street car line arrangement may be made far more convenient and that a traffic focal point may be had, serving not only the railroads but the interurban lines and local electric lines.

The adoption of the foregoing plan of railroad rearrangement furthermore makes possible the location of this Union Station, at a point which in many respects will add to the convenience and attractiveness of the city as a whole.

The chief objection to the present station locations is the remoteness from the business and hotel district. We have therefore suggested that the new Union Station be located as shown, between Washington and Jefferson Streets. At this point the Illinois Central right of way is two hundred feet wide. The land along the railroad is low and an opportunity is offered to construct a building which will have the advantage of two levels with approaches to station platforms without crossing tracks. The loca-



Passenger Stations in Decatur

tion would be only five blocks from the center of the business district or about one-half distance to the present stations. At this site, the disadvantages of the crossing from a railroad standpoint would be done away with.

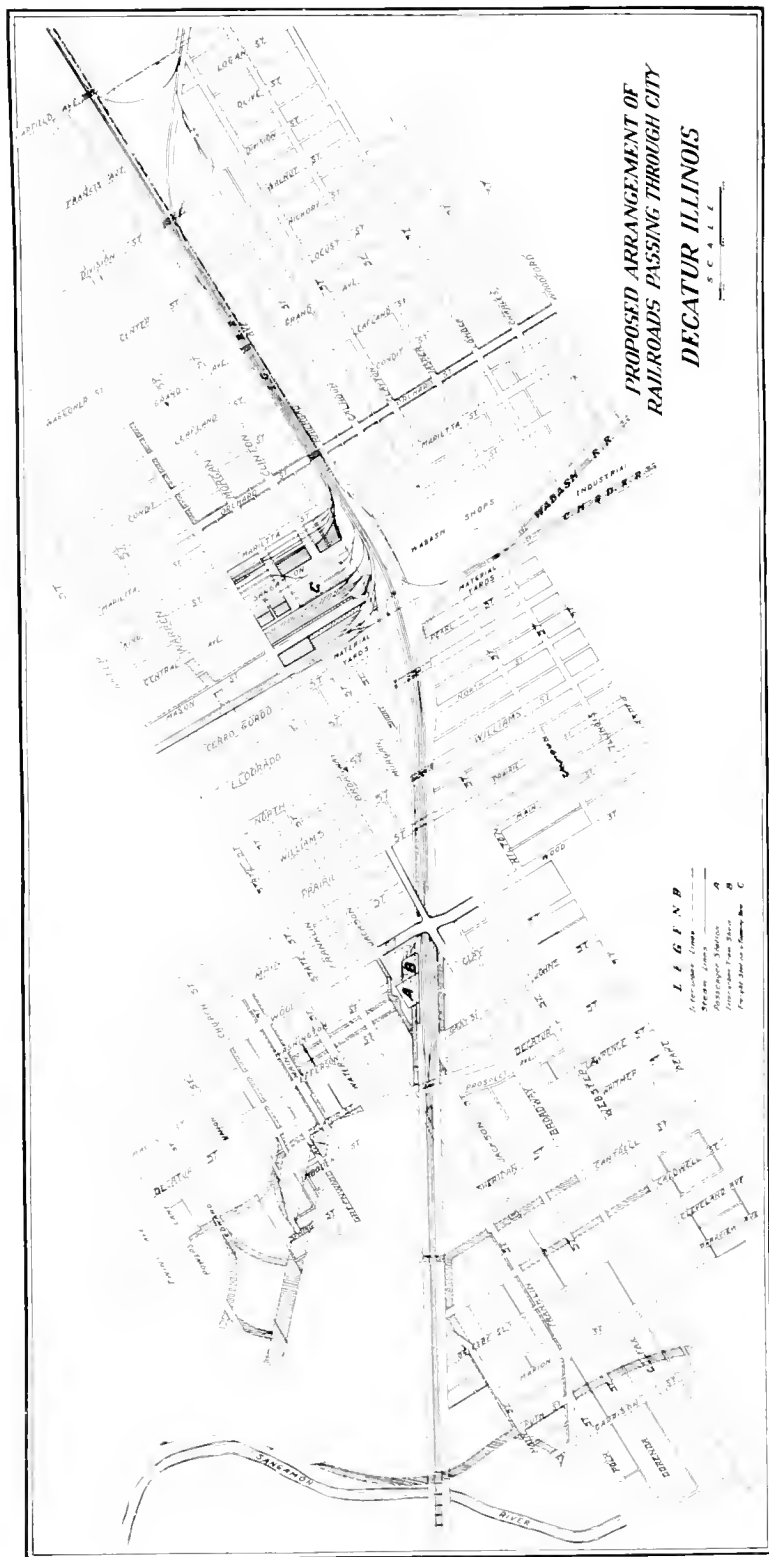
All present interurbans or those which may in the future enter the city, could be conveniently handled at this point.

The station should be so developed and placed as to become, in all respects, the front door to the city. Not only would it be conveniently placed, but its environs would be in keeping with its character as a civic feature.

Located as shown, the proposed Union Station would have the crowning advantage from a city standpoint of becoming part of the proposed civic center. Instead of being surrounded and hemmed in by second rate shops and buildings of the usual character, it would look out upon a harmonious and beautiful group of public buildings adequately set off by parkings, and would itself form an element to a harmonious scheme of architecture. It would therefore have the two the prime advantages of beauty and convenience.



Congestion of Tracks at Wabash Station—The City Will Soon Demand Better Station Facilities



The proposed main railroad group is shown from the Sangamon River to Garfield Street, together with locations for freight and passenger stations. Proposed street corrections in this section are also shown.

FREIGHT YARDS

The present freight yards and team tracks of the city are located to the southeast of Sangamon Street and Broadway. At present there is handled in and out of these three yards approximately 150,000 tons of less than car load freight annually, aside from a small proportion of the 30,000 cars of car load freight handled within the city each year.

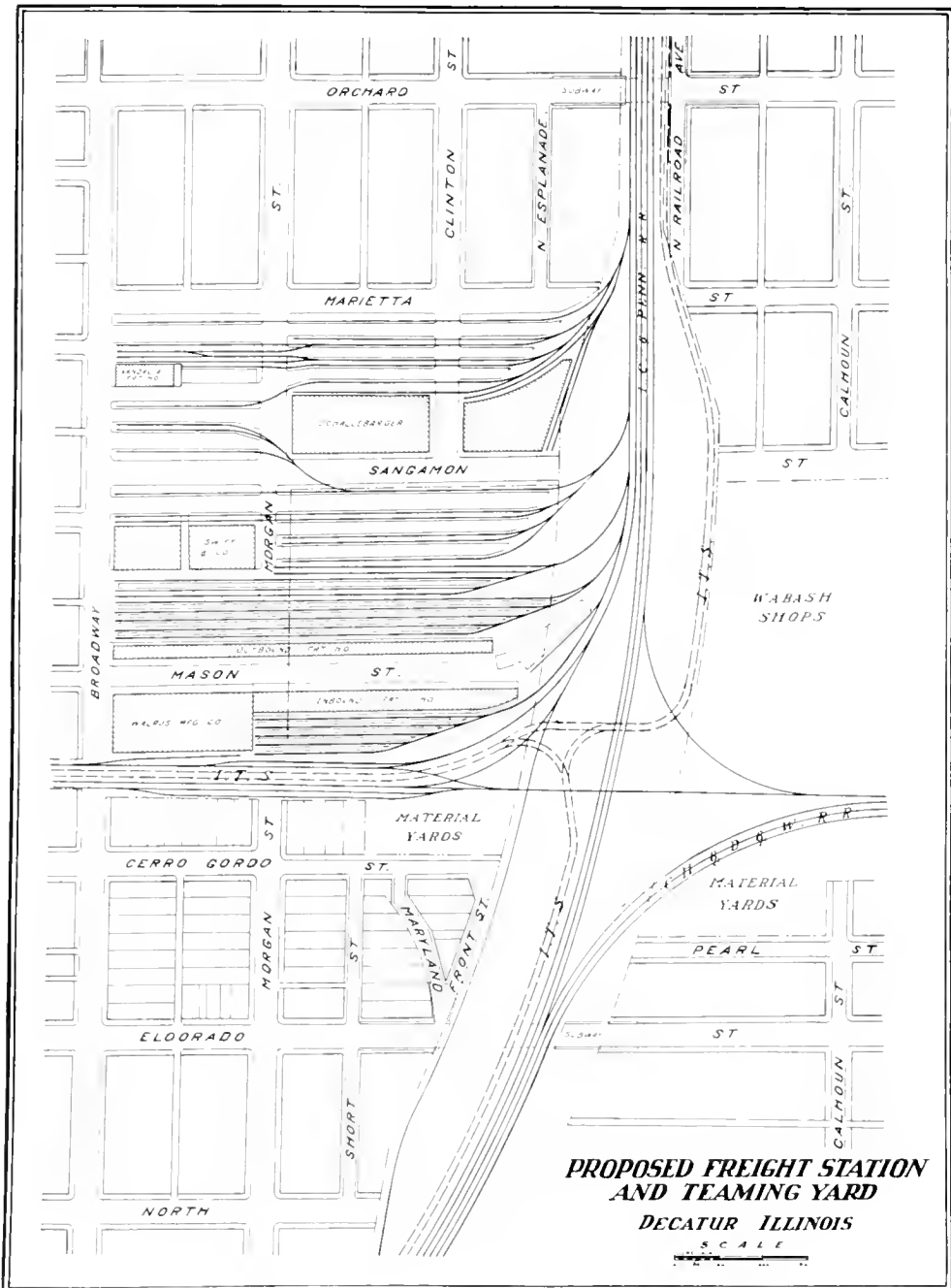
The yards are scattered over approximately 23 acres, presenting considerable loss in ground efficiency as well as unnecessary overhead costs which may be saved by unification.

A team track and freight house layout is herein presented which would have the following capacity:

Vandalia Freight House	25 cars
Proposed In Bound Freight House.....	46 cars
Proposed Out Bound Freight House.....	103 cars
Proposed Transfer Tracks	90 cars
Proposed Teaming Tracks	187 cars
Total	451 cars



THE PENNSYLVANIA FREIGHT STATION AND SURROUNDINGS
Here, Under the Proposed Plan, an Adequate Freight Terminal Would Be
Installed, to Serve the City for Years to Come



.....

The above capacity is based on present average car loads with 24 hour period of handling. This is about four times the capacity of the three present yards. A large increase in handling capacity over the above can be obtained by working extra shifts, by the use of electric trucks and by the standardization of freight cars which is rapidly being brought about. The latter would allow the elimination of the island platforms provided in the plan and a subsequent 50% increase of track space to the freight houses.

The location of the yard has the advantage of being between the business and factory districts, both of which it will serve conveniently. The space now occupied by the railroads south of the Wabash tracks and north of Eldorado Street would serve as yard room for coal, building material, etc. Only one and one-half blocks of land are proposed to be acquired under the plan, the remainder now being owned by the railroad companies.

SUMMARY OF RAILROAD CHANGE BENEFITS

By carrying out the above recommendations, the following benefits would accrue to the city:

Five and one-half miles of main track would be removed from the present city.

Fifty-seven grade crossings would be abolished within the present city.

Nine and one-half miles of main track and 168 crossings would be removed from the city as shown by the plan for future plotting.

All main line grade crossings would be abolished.

Unified freight house and team track facilities would be given.

Better opportunities for interchange of freight between railroads would be afforded.

West side of city would be freed from railroad lines with the exception of freight spur along present factory district.

Gives opportunity for important diagonal street to southwest over present Wabash right of way.

Provides union passenger station away from railroad crossing and at a point which will cause it to become an integral part of the civic center.

Street Car and Interurban Transportation

Proposed Comprehensive System of Street Car Lines

Discussion of the Economy of the Plan

Interurban Lines

Station Facilities

STREET CAR AND INTERURBAN TRANSPORTATION

FOR the reason that street car lines are generally owned and operated by private companies for gain and for the reason that their service is paid for immediately and is therefore constantly forced to attention, the public is apt to look upon their operators as parasites on its pocketbook, and upon the city's power of franchise.

As a matter of fact, the success of any city depends very largely on its public street transportation. If a city is to prosper, if it is to spread out and grow larger, if it is to be able to use definite sections for distinct purposes, ability must be given to travel between the homes and places of business with regularity and speed.

So far no means of public conveyance on a comprehensive scale has taken the place of electric surface cars. Street car systems have become as much the part of the organism of cities as have water supply or sewer systems. No city plan can be complete unless a proportionate number of streets are laid out with the definite purpose of providing for street car lines.

The street car problem presents a somewhat different aspect when viewed as a city element, from that when looked upon as a source of private revenue. The test for the public is in providing within easy walking distance for every home, car lines on which there will be frequent and rapid transit to all important points within the city. From the operating standpoint, the most successful line is the one which gives the greatest net returns to the car mile.

The citizen wants to be able to purchase a reasonable priced lot on the outskirts on which he may develop a home, and still be able to secure regular transportation to his work, which may be on the other side of the city.

The street car company prefers to wait with the extensions of its lines until fairly dense population has taken place.

It is to the interest of the company not to keep pace with the geographical growth of the city, whereas it is much to the interest of the city that the development of car lines keep ahead of city growth. Where this does not take place, the city must grow up

in the air. The tenement with its unhealthful congestion is encouraged and the private home of the ordinary type with its garden, its sunlight and its influence toward better citizenship is discouraged. Herein lies, if not an argument for municipal ownership, at least an argument for thorough control by the municipality of the layout and operation of street car lines.

The ideal layout of car lines from the city's standpoint would, in the first place, provide a fairly even distribution of lines over the entire city, spaced so that every home would be within convenient walking distance of some line and with lines kept extended well out into the sparsely built up sections.

This would encourage a more even development of the city, the building of homes on larger lots and would have a considerable effect on stabilizing land values over the entire city.

*In the city of Toronto, Canada, it has been determined that a valuation increase of 68% on land has been brought about by street car extensions. Whereas these extensions cost but 6% of the increase of such values in the districts served.

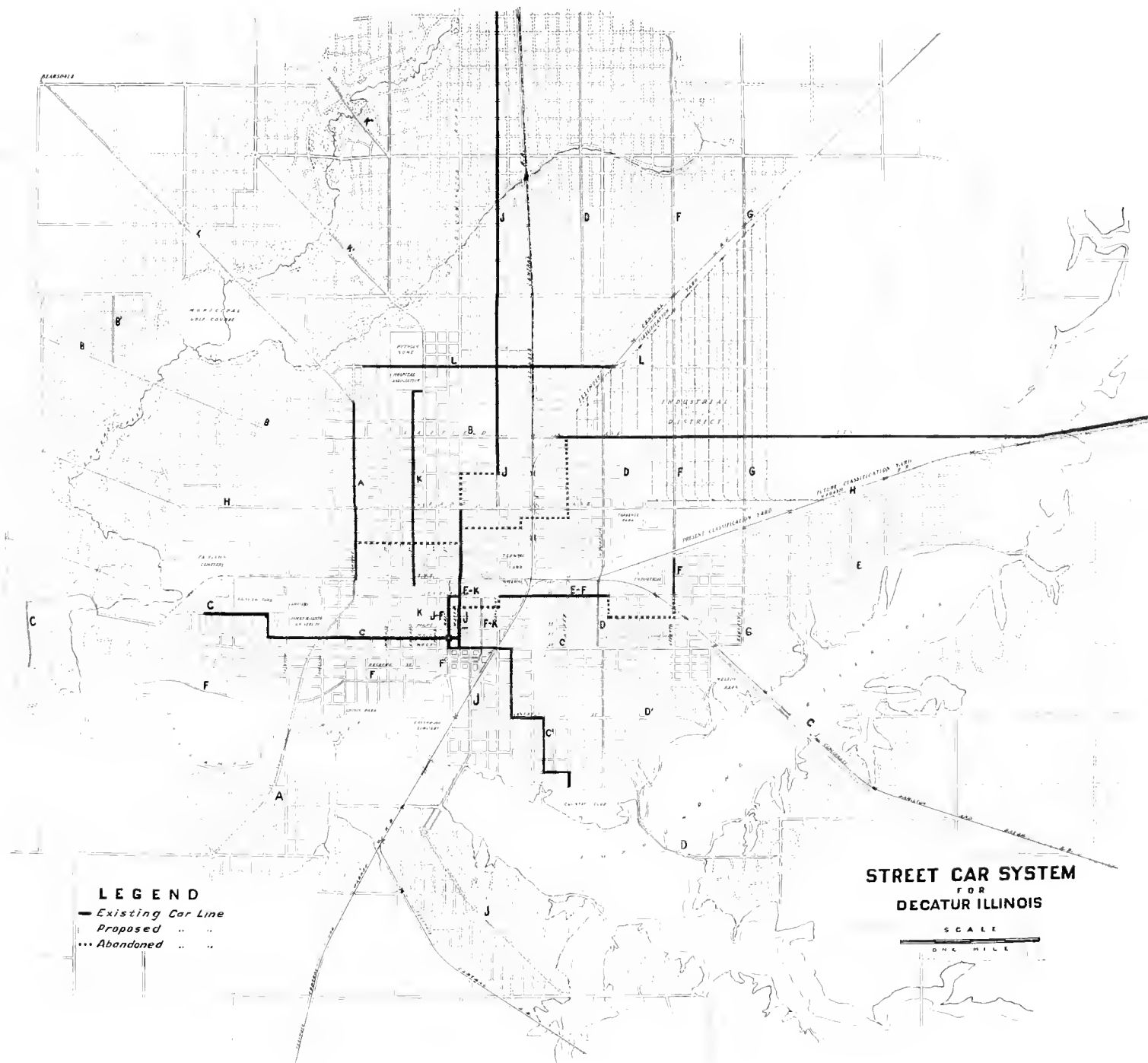
PROPOSED COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF STREET CAR LINES

The proposed car line system which would serve the Decatur of 150,000 population would include 68 miles of track, 16 miles of which is existing. It would provide transportation either direct or with but one transfer from any part of the city to the business district, factory district and Union Station, where connections would be made with all interurban and steam lines.

Spacing is such in the outlying districts that the usual distance of a car line from any home would not exceed two thousand feet. One way routing would be adopted in Water, Main, Jackson and Edward Streets to relieve congestion. By this plan the necessity for the old transfer station at Lincoln Square would no longer exist.

The arrangement of lines and routing as shown on the accompanying street car plan would be as follows:

*Report Ontario Housing Committee 1919.



Three east and west lines and three north and south lines through factory district.

Inner loop over North, Main, Water, Eldorado and through civic center.

The above routing of lines would bring about the abandonment of 4.1 miles of existing track as follows:

The West Orchard line from Water Street to the present belt line and Condit Street line from Water Street to Jasper Street would be abandoned to give a direct through route on Grand Avenue which would serve the factory district more directly.

The portion of the Condit Street line on Jasper Street would be replaced by a through line on Woodford Street.

The line on Water Street north of Grand and on Division as far as Broadway would be removed. Instead, a line would be carried east on Grand and north on Broadway. The change in view of the proposed layout would give better distribution and save one fourth mile of track.

That portion of Edward Street line on Cerro Gordo Street and the portion of the Eldorado Street line on North and William Streets would be removed to relieve heavy traffic on Cerro Gordo Street and to provide a direct through line on Eldorado Street. This would give more direct service from the west to the Staley plant and would do away with the awkward detour over William Street.

DISCUSSION OF THE ECONOMY OF THE PLAN

The car line system as shown can be built with reasonable assurance that it will be a paying investment. It has been found in cities that the number of revenue passengers increase at double the rate of increase in population. Based on the number of present rides per capita in Decatur, these will increase to 300 rides per capita before a population of 150,000 is reached.

The number of five cent fares from 150,000 people at 300 rides per annum will pay 38% gross revenue on an investment of \$85,000 per mile on the 68 miles shown in this system. Valuation engineers have found that this valuation of \$85,000.00 per mile is usual in cities having a population of from 100,000 to 150,000. Such a

gross revenue based on present operating costs is a paying investment.

Extensions to lines spaced as shown can be carried into territory having but five people to the acre, which is but 40% average density. The number of fares based on 300 rides per capita per annum will pay interest and depreciation on the additional trackage and equipment needed and on the additional cost of operation.

INTERURBAN LINES

Interurban lines would, according to the plan, be routed as follows:

Line from the west would enter city over existing track with grade crossings abolished to a point north of Calvary Cemetery, from which point tracks would be elevated on abandoned Wabash right of way to Illinois Central Railroad. From this point, line would be carried along west side of group to Union Station.

Line from north would abandon present right of way at edge of plotted area and would cross to east side of Illinois Central, thence extend parallel to railroad south to point at which line approaches from the west, where it would again cross railroad and continue to Union Station.

Line from east would join that from north at Garfield Avenue.

STATION FACILITIES

The train shed for interurbans at the Union Station would be at the north side of structure and carried over the low level street. The possibility of a future interurban line from the south has been contemplated in the station arrangement.

The advantages of the above arrangement would be primarily to give rapid transit from a central point in the city to the outskirts which is impossible while using the streets as at present. The streets of the city would also be freed from congestion due to interurban trains.

By bringing all interurbans to the Union Station, a central transfer station would be secured between all steam, interurban and local electric lines.

The Zoning Plan

Heavy Industrial Zone

Light Industrial and Warehouse

Light Industrial and Commercial

First Residential

Second Residential

Park Zone

Cemeteries

THE ZONING PLAN

A COMPREHENSIVE plan for zoning the city, including both the present and future sections in Decatur, is submitted with this report.

Zoning is desirable only as by it the various departments of the city may be made to profit. To force zoning upon a city against economic law is suicidal. If the city is so built that its various departments, factories, businesses, warehouses, homes, etc., will be provided satisfactory arrangement in various locations, sufficient to encourage their respective upbuilding, then not only will these departments prosper individually, but the good derived from keeping them distinct and from encroaching on each other, will be accomplished.

Zoning must be comprehensive to be worth while. Piecemeal zoning is but a repetition of the old practice whereby all elements of the city were mixed together at random. The only difference being that the proportions are larger.

The zoning law recently passed by the Illinois Legislature permits of piecemeal zoning, but there seems to be an opportunity to practice comprehensive zoning under this law. If this is found to be true and providing the law will stand the supreme court test, a great step forward in city planning within the state will be accomplished.

The Decatur Zone plan calls for six types of restricted districts, as follows:

Heavy Industrial

Light Industrial and Commercial

Light Industrial and Warehouse

First Residential

Second Residential

Parks and Schools

HEAVY INDUSTRIAL ZONE

This comprises the proposed factory district to the northeast of the city, which should be made to accommodate all new industries like foundries, automobile factories, mills, chemical works or industries of like nature, which would be objectionable to have in close proximity to homes. It is probable that many of the lighter industries would also seek this location on account of its advantages.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND WAREHOUSE

This would include the present factory district along the Wabash railroad and also along the Illinois Central to the south of the Junction, with an added area near the freight terminal.

In the case of the district along the Wabash, the aim should be to keep out new enterprises of heavy manufacturing and to gradually work toward the elimination of the freight line which would be left after removing the main line of the Wabash railroad.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL AND COMMERCIAL

This district would permit all business houses, stores both retail and wholesale, office buildings and certain types of light and unobjectionable manufacturing.

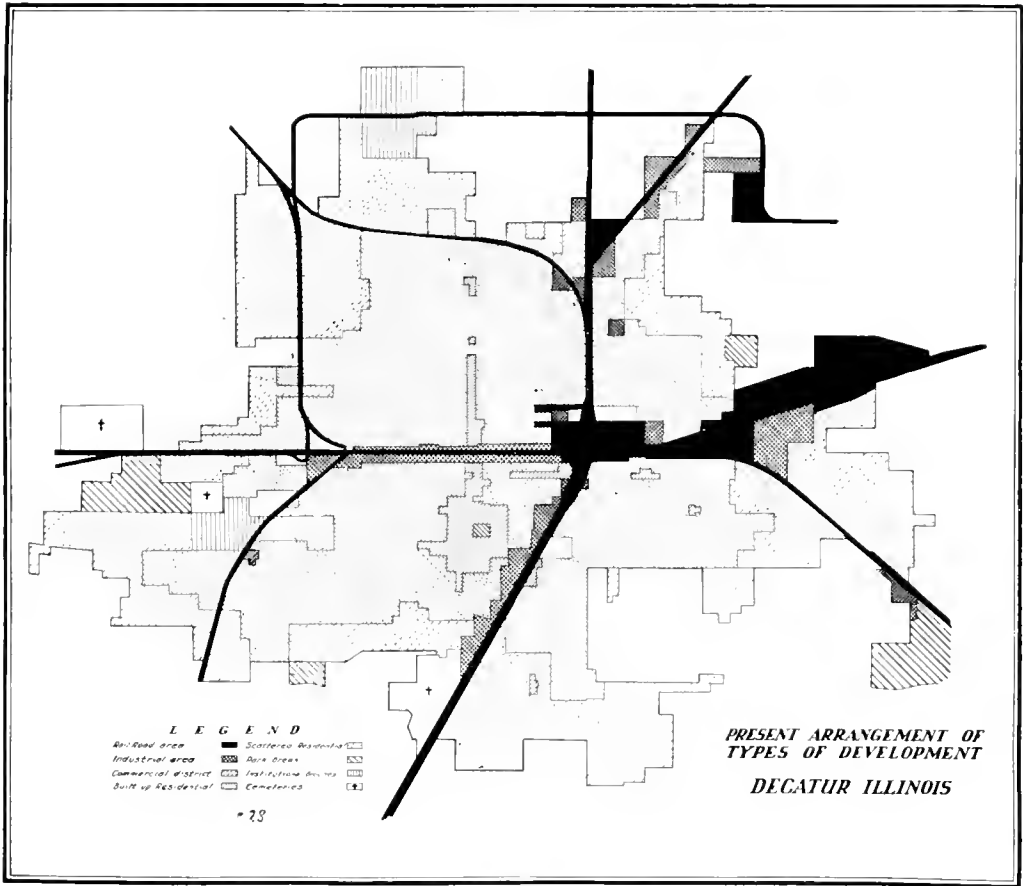
Outlying business zones are placed on car line streets and at intersections of such streets and are designed as to area to accommodate the city for forty years. Thereafter the zones would be allowed to extend along these main thoroughfares.

FIRST RESIDENTIAL

This would be restricted to the use of dwellings but would allow apartment houses, tenements, hotels, lodging or boarding houses and other duplex or multiplex residences.

SECOND RESIDENTIAL

Restricted to private residences, including single, duplex or multiplex houses not of the apartment type.





Looking Down Upon the Center of the Business District from an Aeroplane

PARK ZONE

Including the park and school ground system as shown.

All proposed zones shown are based on a population of 150,000. Intermediate zones should be fixed by ordinance at intervals of possibly ten years.

CEMETERIES

While not classed as a separate zone, the general location of future cemeteries should be considered in advance. By the time Decatur shall have reached a population of 150,000, there will be needed somewhat over two hundred acres of improved cemetery land, aside from that now available for use.

Where new cemeteries may be placed and how they shall be improved and maintained is a matter of public concern. While the modern park cemetery under perpetual care operation is a great advance over the old time graveyard, new cemeteries are not usually welcomed by nearby land owners.

It is suggested that two or possibly three general locations be prescribed in advance, in which cemeteries may be installed. These whether built by the city or by private concerns should be surrounded by a park strip not less than fifty feet in width and suitably improved and so parked as to form a screen, shutting off from view the cemetery proper from surrounding homes. Such provision would give notice to prospective property buyers of the installation of a cemetery and would protect the outlook from residences built on abutting ground.

Housing

HOUSING

IN 1913, the City Council of Decatur adopted a building code which compares favorably with those of most cities in the country. The code was carefully prepared and goes as far in protecting the citizens of Decatur against injury and disease as is probably permissible under the laws of Illinois.

Like nearly all building codes, it covers principally such structural requirements as will insure the safety of buildings from collapse and fire.

The newer conception of good housing takes cognizance of the need of building control to insure the proper circulation of air, amount of sunlight, the regulation of population density, the satisfactory relation of building mass to lot area and the location of structures with relation to lot lines. Broadly it applies not only to safety but to comfort and to the protection of nearby property as well.

The housing situation in Decatur is not bad compared with many industrial cities of its size. It is decidedly better than that in most of the larger cities. The problem of better housing here, therefore, lies not so much in the correction of present conditions as to future control.

While instances were noted in the survey of the city which would doubtless be corrected in the event of the adoption of a building code of broader scope, these instances are alarming only as they point directly toward a condition which surely will take place when the city becomes considerably larger, unless provided against now.

The transformation from ordinary to bad housing is nearly always insidious. Rarely does it take place quickly and in a wholesale manner.

As new industries come and activities increase, houses now owned and occupied by a single family will become occupied by two or more families. Basements will be used for living quarters and cheap dwellings will spring up on back lots and facing alleys. The tenement will come and therein will be introduced the bane of the average manufacturing city.

Decatur cannot hope to grow in size without absorbing its proportion of comparatively low price labor. It is the housing of this class that really constitutes the big problem.

There is no question but that the ordinary workman is better housed in America than in any other land. To a very large extent, he owns and takes pride in his home. To this fact and to the public school do we owe to a very great extent the high type of average citizenship which makes America supreme among nations. To maintain and improve this situation rather than to permit of a retrograde movement is manifestly important.

The policy for future housing in Decatur should be to:

- (1) Encourage the individual home built on ample ground and owned by its occupant.
- (2) Permit the construction or reconstruction of single homes within the city only as shall insure adequate air circulation and sunlight.
- (3) Permit the erecting of multiplex dwellings only in such manner as to give each occupant proper amount of room, sunlight, air and satisfactory outlook.
- (4) Limit height and mass of all dwellings in proportion to size of lot.
- (5) Limit multiplex dwellings of apartment type to restricted zones.
- (6) Insure against population density, unsanitary places of abode and surroundings, dwellings on alleys and the erection of homes on areas subject to flood.
- (7) Encourage a satisfactory type of architecture and arrangement of buildings on the lot.

We recommend the passage of a zoning and housing ordinance which will establish the uses and restrictions of zones as set forth by the plan and which will cover matters pertaining to improved housing. This ordinance should be framed only after a careful consideration of other zoning ordinances in effect. Among other provisions it should include the following:

Allow the continuance for present use of all existing buildings except in special cases.

Allow no building now existing to be reoccupied or altered for

occupancy nor any new building to be erected for purposes against which the district is restricted.

Powers should be given the Public Service Department to make the following exceptions by special permit where such are necessary:

Permit the erection of temporary buildings for business purposes in the residential districts.

Permit alterations not to exceed 75% of the assessed value of the building for purposes against which the district is restricted.

Permit the reconstruction of buildings destroyed by fire to an extent not to exceed 75% of the assessed value of the building for purposes against which the district is restricted.

The ordinance should further:

Provide for maximum height of buildings in the various zones or portions of zones.

Divide the city into area districts within which shall be regulated the sizes of side and rear yards, outer and enclosed courts, the building area in proportion to the size of lots and the set back from front property lines.



One of the Many Examples of Neighborhood Stores, Placed Forward on the Building Line, and Marring the Appearance of the Home Section

Parks

Interior Parks

Johns Hill

A Farmers Headquarters

Central Park

The Boulevard System

School Parks

Park Design

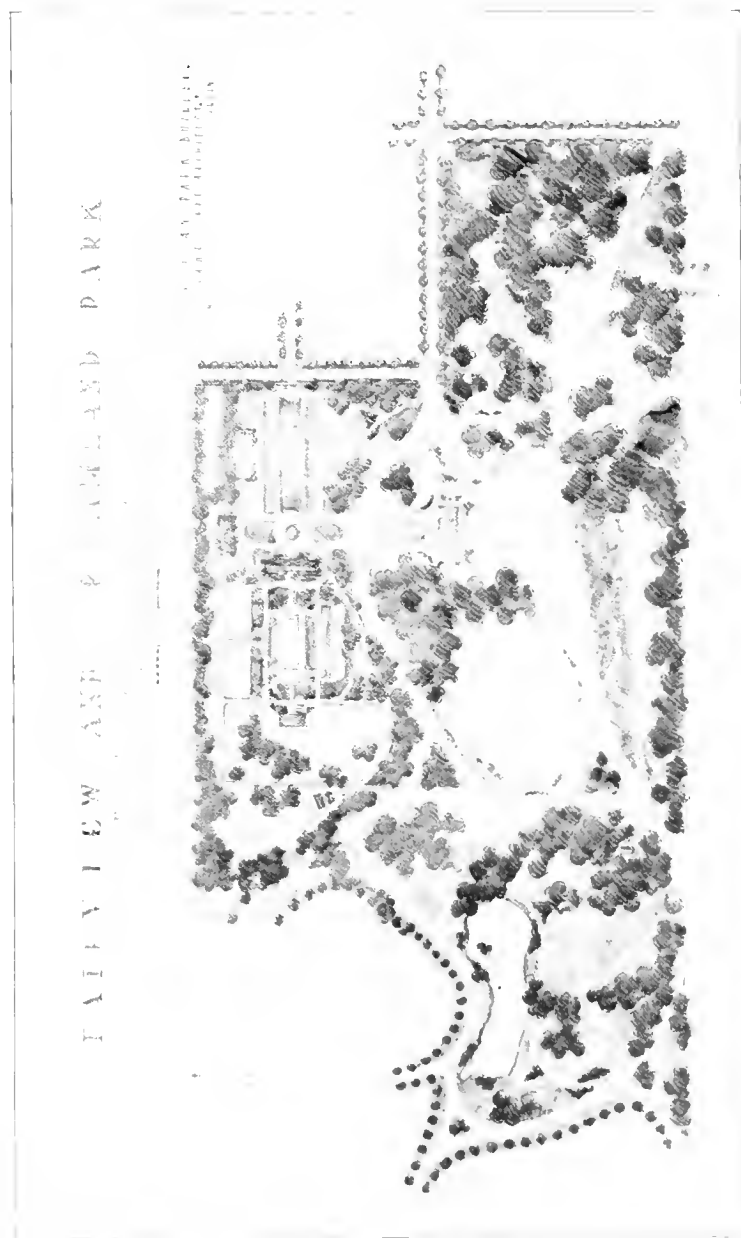
PARKS

IN CITY planning, parks, playgrounds, parkings and grounds of various sorts used for the enjoyment of the public should be looked upon mainly from the standpoint of area, location and accessibility rather than that of landscape detail. The park system should be dealt with in the same way as is a system of car lines or any other feature necessary to the city's composition. A park system is an adjunct to the home division of the city. It is built to fulfill a definite and accepted purpose, that of making the city more attractive and enjoyable and to give the benefits of recreation.

Incidentally, parks give other important service, such as the letting into the city of sunlight and air, not an unimportant matter when the city becomes congested. Parks in most instances enhance the value of contiguous land and this in turn increases the city's taxable revenue. Parks serve as a valuable medium for advertising the city. Many cities, ordinary in their general character, have become distinguished on account of their parks and have profited immeasurably thereby.

Beautiful parks go far toward stimulating civic pride; a tonic without which no city may be normal. Finally, parks, if well placed, well designed and well built, give the crowning visible evidence of good planning. By its parking is a city tested, not only for its culture and good taste but for its foresightedness and good business sense. No city can afford to be poorly parked, as no store can afford to have other than a good window display.

But first of all, parks are for the enjoyment of the city's inhabitants. Therefore they should be placed where people may enjoy them without undue inconvenience. To a very large measure, parks are built for children—and therefore convenient location of park units becomes doubly important. In order that parks may be convenient for use, they must be placed near the homes. Units should be placed with more or less geometrical regularity so that zones of influence of fairly regular size may be served. It has become an accepted principle in city planning that some sort of a park should be within a half mile—comfortable walking distance—of every home.



This cut shows a proposed arrangement of Fairview Park, enlarged by the addition of Dreamland Park.

The scheme calls for the re-arrangement of roads, walks and planting and provision for a conservatory and flower gardens, also a zoological collection.

Parks naturally group themselves according to their size and treatment into playgrounds, school parks, central parks, neighborhood parks and scenic parks. The treatment and furnishings of these various kinds of parks have been largely standardized.

Playgrounds are fitted for intensive recreational activities. Playfields and athletic apparatus are installed. Often neighborhood center buildings with gymnasiums, concert halls, etc., are built, and trained physical instructors placed in charge.

School parks, first of all, should furnish adequate sites for school buildings with ample room for extensions thereto without its later being necessary to acquire added property. In addition, they should furnish ample room for both organized and informal play for children during the school season and for neighborhood activities during the remainder of the year. School buildings if properly arranged become ideal neighborhood centers where various social activities may be held. School parks should be not less than a standard block in size or approximately four acres and may cover several times this area to advantage. The school park properly developed does away with the necessity for the playground.

Only by setting aside these tracts as land is plotted and securing them for the public while they can be purchased at reasonable price may economy be exercised and a satisfactory series of school parks be insured.

Central parks, or "down town parks," are usually too limited in size to permit of play features. They are primarily rest places provided with benches, shade, a fountain perhaps, a bandstand and, where possible, flowers. Downtown parks are usually susceptible to better arrangement and a fuller use than generally accorded them. Better facilities for open air concerts and public speaking, more adequate and comfortable seating, more toilet and rest rooms and better landscape treatment can generally be provided to advantage.

Neighborhood parks are larger in extent, embodying some of the natural treatment of the still larger scenic park, but are arranged more especially to meet the needs of a local community. Baseball fields, tennis courts, swimming pools, facilities for tobogganing and ice skating are often introduced.

Scenic parks or larger outlying units, give space for woodland,



Along the Sangamon

meadow and waterway, where drives and picnic grounds, golf courses and lakes for boating, fishing and skating may be furnished, a place where the freedom and beauties of nature may assuage the enervating influence of city life.

These various park units should supplement each other as to features. As for instance, a park with a swimming pool or a baseball field may draw from a larger zone, while one having a zoological garden, a conservatory or a natural history museum may serve the entire city.

Larger park units where possible should be connected by parkways or boulevards, which in reality are but elongated parks, built for driving and riding and suitably paved, planted, lighted and furnished with interesting views to give the greatest comfort and pleasure to their users.

Parkways should, moreover, wherever possible, lead from various directions to the center of the city. They should be freed from heavy traffic and made to furnish routes for light, fast moving vehicles. This makes more accesible the business section of the city and largely relieves the congestion and danger on streets where fast and slow traffic are intermingled.

It is generally accepted as standard that there should be a ratio of one hundred people to each acre of improved park.

Decatur at present has 182 acres of park lands, not all of which are improved. With a population of 43,818 there is given a ratio of 240 people to the park acre.

The park plan as shown calls for the acquirement of 2500 acres in addition to the 182 acres now owned by the city. While this gives a ratio of 55 people to the acre based on a population of 150,000, a large portion is outlying ravine and river bank lands, which will in turn serve a still greater number of people. Much of this land should be secured to safeguard the city's water supply, while other land along the ravine should be taken over to guard against housing development on areas subject to flood.

The most imposing feature of the proposed parking scheme would be these outlying reservations extending along the Stevens Creek Valley and the banks of the Sangamon. These are areas of natural charm to the ownership of which the public of Decatur has the right to aspire.

The valley of Stevens Creek is particularly valuable for a park. On each side are lands destined to become high class residential sites. The valley is of course unsuitable for residence purposes and



STEVENS CREEK TERRITORY

Ideal Sites for Parks, for Future Decatur, Are to Be Had Along This Charming Waterway

if allowed to be used for buildings would but encourage the shacks and undesirable structures always found in such places.

Above all, this bit of natural beauty should not be despoiled. The entire valley with its sloping banks and a narrow strip along their crest should be secured for public use. Curved drives as provided in the street layout would carry along the summits giving admirable views up and down the valley.

This reservation would begin with a narrow strip directly north of the hospital and continue to the junction of the creek and river. Here and there it would widen out to include some especially desirable tract and to provide room for golf courses or other special features requiring particular shape, topography and size. A drive would lead through the bottom lands connecting with important streets leading across the valley. This drive would connect with the river parkway and with the parkway leading around to the north of the city.

The impounding of the Sangamon to furnish water supply for Decatur makes possible yet another reservation, which, if secured, will add tremendously to the city's beauty.

A generous strip of land along each bank of the new lake should be acquired, along which a driveway would be carried. Generally this park strip should extend well to the top of the slopes, leading to the water's edge. This is necessary in the first place to insure



Wood and Meadow Along Stevens Creek

against the pollution of the water supply, and to enable the laying of an intercepting sewer along this boundary road. Only by controlling the banks in this way can the reservoir be adequately controlled.

No buildings except park structures should be built between the boundary drives and the water's edge. By so doing, miles of homes may front the lake, obtaining an unobstructed view and presenting an attractive appearance from the lake and bordering parks.

While careful regulation will doubtless be found necessary in the use of the lake for boating and fishing, this body of water and the flanking shores may fittingly become Decatur's great place of recreation which in time will extend through a large section of the built up city and will be used daily by thousands.

Below the new dam lies a mediumly wide and flat valley through which the Sangamon winds sluggishly. This valley is subject to overflow and has therefore been kept free from buildings. It would appear that as the city grows out beyond to the south, this land should be used for public purposes, if for no other reason than to keep it from being sold for cheap house lots and built upon. Decatur has ample high land for building purposes to forestall developing homes whereon there will be the annual menace of floods. Yet it invariably happens that such places left long enough eventually sell for house lots and are built upon in spite of the obvious danger.

While the flooding of these lands might be guarded against, by deepening and straightening the river, they would never be satisfactory for building sites.

It has been suggested that a dam be built across the river at the intersection of Stevens Creek in order to form a second lake which may be used for bathing. It would hardly seem that the benefits would warrant the expense. A number of swimming pools could be built at less cost, the water in which would be more sanitary. Aside from bathing, the upper lake will serve all necessary purposes of recreation.

These low lands for many years will doubtless be of more value to the city as farms and market gardens. Later they may be used for aviation landing fields, golf courses, school gardens, etc. Their

acquisition by the city is not urged at present. Many years will probably elapse before they will be needed, meanwhile steps should be taken to discourage the erection thereon of buildings of permanent character.

INTERIOR PARKS

Aside from enlarging several school grounds, the plan for additional interior parks contemplates but three units, namely forty acres at Garfield and Water Streets, Johns' Hill, sixteen acres of which would become a school park, and the small tract lying along the railroad south to Prairie Street consisting of about six acres. These areas would care for, in a fairly satisfactory way, the present unparked sections of the city.

The first tract mentioned is especially needed. This section of the city has no park at present. The land is possessed of natural advantages and is large enough to serve the neighborhood. This land has been subdivided and it is apparent that there can be no delay if the city is to secure it for park purposes. (Provided it is found impracticable to secure the tract in question that lying immediately to the north although somewhat more remote would serve.)



Beautiful Native Forests May Still Be Found in the Environs of Decatur. Where Possible, Such Land Should Be Taken Over Before It Is Despoiled by the Constant Advance of the City

JOHNS HILL

This hill with its excellent views calls for consideration in any park study. A park unit is needed in this locality. The location of the proposed junior high school here would alone give sufficient reason for its acquirement.



Johns Hill, One of Decatur's Landmarks, Forms a Desirable Site for a School Park

A FARMER'S HEADQUARTERS

It is suggested that some place be arranged in Decatur where farmers may make their headquarters, while in town, where they may leave their cars or teams, where their families may rest and lunch and where telephone service may be provided.

There would be needed a sufficient area for automobile parking and to furnish room for a suitable building. Such a place would probably be used to some extent by tourists. It would form a suitable headquarters for the farm bureau and would be to some extent useful to the citizens of Decatur.

Not many sites are available for such an institution. Room could probably be found in the proposed civic center, but it is suggested that the vacant site south of Prairie and east of the Illinois Central be considered. While separated from the business center by the railroad, the underpass on Prairie Street removes largely the objection on this account. A portion of the hill would have to be cut down to permit of the building, but the major part would be left as a screen to shut off the railroad.

The remainder of the grounds could be arranged for play purposes with field apparatus, a children's playground, and possibly

a swimming pool which, thus centrally located, would serve the entire downtown section.

CENTRAL PARK

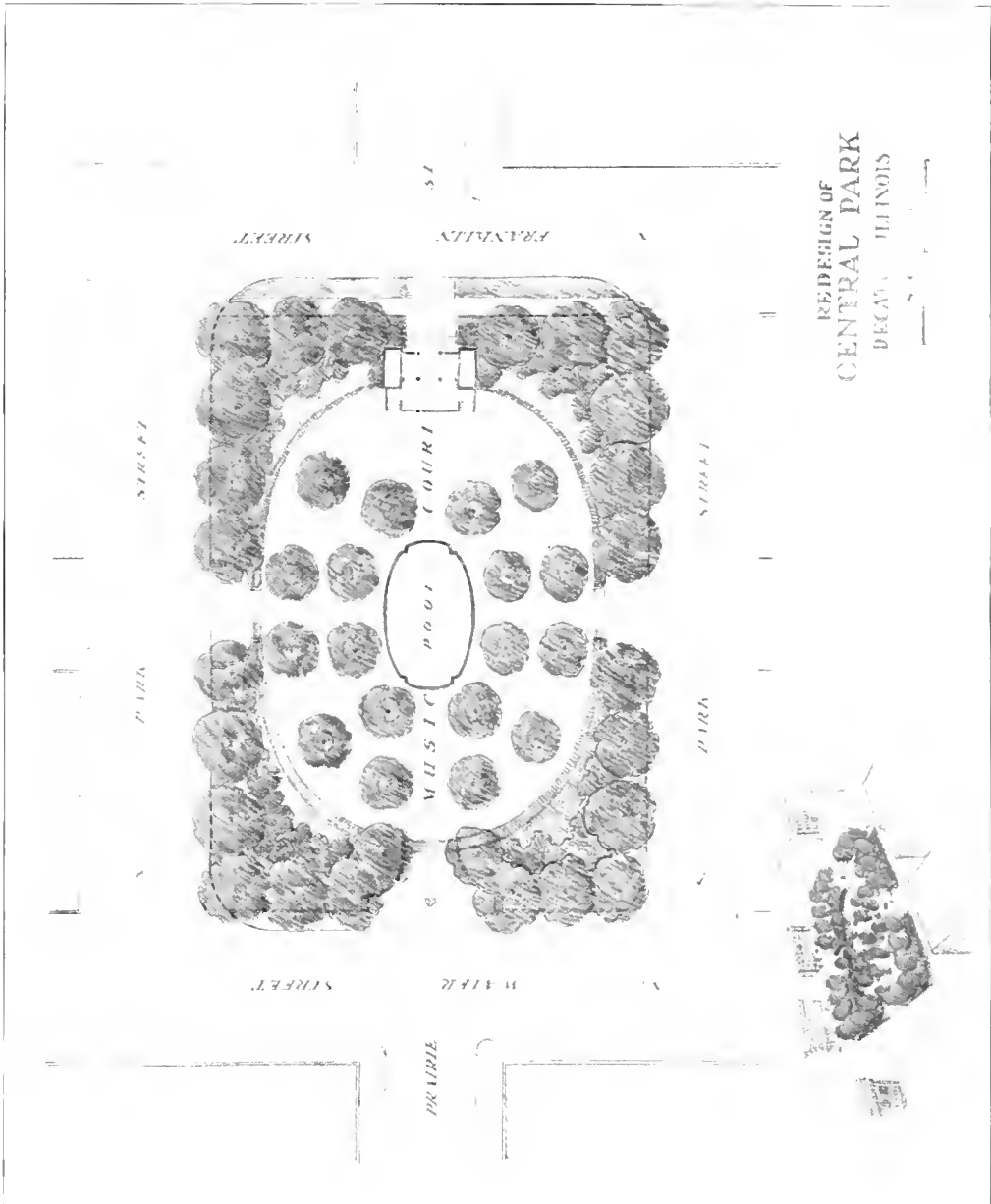
While somewhat out of the scope of this report we are submitting a suggested rearrangement for Central Park. There would be provided an out-of-doors forum which would accommodate several thousand people and give an unobstructed view of the platform from which public speeches, concerts or theatricals could be given. The introduction of water, shade and flowers is suggested and public toilet stations should be provided.

The natural slope of the ground to the east makes possible the carrying out of this plan with comparatively little grading. The theater would be placed at the east side of the park on the axis of Prairie Street but far enough back from the street line to provide for a planting screen which would make possible the entrance to the stage unobserved by the audience.

The park rearranged in this manner would give much broader use than at present, at which time it furnishes little more than a



Central Park, in the Midst of Decatur's Business Section, as Viewed from an Aeroplane



shaded retreat. Concerts given in the little bandstand are cramped affairs both for the musicians and the audience. A centrally located out-of-doors auditorium of this kind would fulfill a long felt need in Decatur.

THE BOULEVARD SYSTEM

An important element of the general park plan is a continuous parkway extending completely around Decatur. Following along the river bank and to the north and east along Stevens Creek it again connects with the river drive north of the Wabash Railroad Bridge. This would form a driveway of twenty miles in length, over which there would be a continuous diversity of scenery. Intersecting this circumferential parkway would be various radial parkways reaching to the center of the city.

It is desirable that the heart of the city may thus be approached from various directions by light, fast moving traffic without interference by heavy teaming, but on the other hand considering the economic importance of heavy traffic to a city, it is necessary to go slowly in the matter of restricting the use of thoroughfares. We have, therefore, suggested such streets for parkways as may be best spared and along which there are parallel lines for heavy teaming.

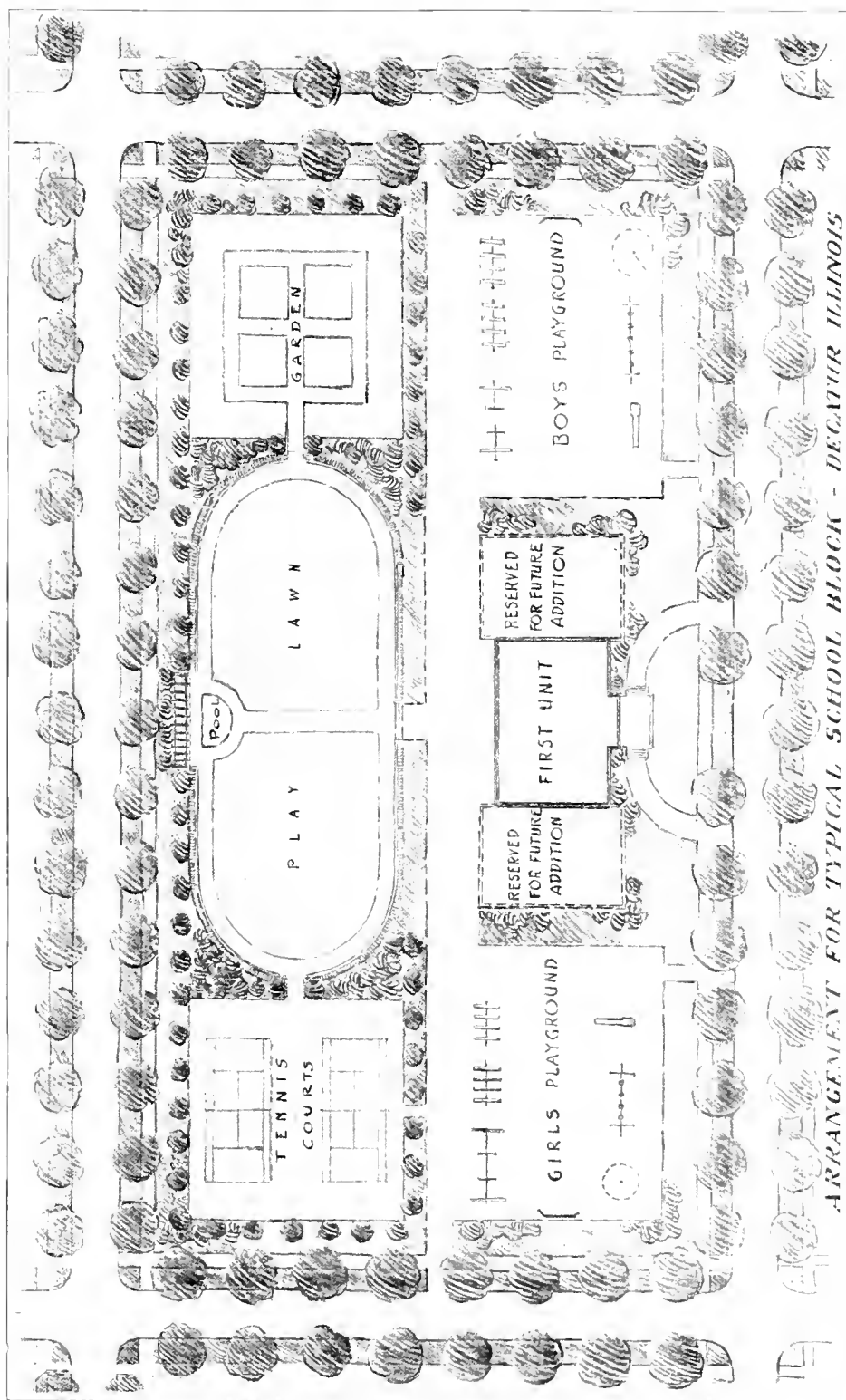
SCHOOL PARKS

Twenty-seven school parks have been designated on the general plan. These average approximately four acres in extent. In all cases they are placed away from car lines and generally off from main traffic streets. They are so distributed as to each have a zone of influence of one-half mile radius.

A suggestion is submitted for a typical school park layout. The main idea, of course, is to cause the park and the school to co-operate in their usefulness to the neighborhood.

An eight-room building is shown capable of accommodating 320 pupils and with provision for extension to take care of an additional 320 pupils, or 640 in all, the average number for a square mile of mediumly built up residence district.

The site, four acres in extent, is arranged for playgrounds, tennis, garden, a lawn oval, set off by a pergola, which would furnish a stage for open air entertainments, a perennial garden, wading pool, drinking fountain, benches, etc. Ample lawn and shade give



Provision is given for the fundamentals of school ground arrangement, room for extensions to the school building, ample area for play and a suitable landscape setting.

attractive setting to the building in which may be provided the assembly hall, club rooms, toilets, kitchens, etc., necessary to a well appointed neighborhood center.

PARK DESIGN

Art in landscape depends on the application of the same principles as does art in painting, in architecture or in house decoration. These principles apply to mass, form, color and proportion and not to personal whim. The best artists of all kinds and times have bowed to the inflexible rules which make for beauty in all things, although it is true that from time to time schools as well as individuals have broken away from these tried and proven rules and have attempted to set up a new art, only to be forgotten along with their works.

A park cannot be made beautiful by filling its area to overflowing with gew-gaws, more than a room may be made beautiful by filling it with bric-a-brac. A park must have proper mass of foliage, water and lawn, proper color balance, which may be so very easily wrecked by an irrelevant geranium bed, a golden elder or a blue spruce, and proper form, whether it be of the horizontal or vertical curve, of a driveway or the terrace to a garden. Let a park be built in a way to disregard these rules of art, and while only the trained artist may be able to diagnose and correct the trouble, there will be even to the slightly cultured a subconscious feeling that something is wrong.

But parks should not only be beauty places, full sized landscape paintings with real water, trees, hills, and flowers used as pigments and fulfilling the best in art either as viewed from the outside or tested by an interior vista, but they must fulfill the test of practicability and everyday use. Every square foot of park surface should be arranged for the use and enjoyment of people. But again, should a park be well balanced as concerning its facilities for use? A park may demand driveways, but they should be kept within bounds and not led here and there and everywhere without reason, to the effect of destroying lawn space often of far greater importance than the drives themselves.

Common sense and an appreciation of the eternal fitness of things must always go far in the building of a successful park.

Schools

High School

Junior High School

Pugh School

Oakland School

Riverside School

Ulrich School

Gastman School

Roach School

Warren School

Jasper School

Dennis School

French School

SCHOOLS

THERE are at present in Decatur sixteen public schools, having a total enrollment of nearly seven thousand students.

The grounds on which these schools are situated occupy about twenty-five acres. The following table shows enrollment, total area, available playground space, percentage of playground space to the child and the estimated population density of the neighborhood:

Schools	Enrollment	Total Area Square Feet	Play Ground Area	Square Feet Play Area a Child	Density of Neigh- borhood
High School	1,261	49,928			
Junior High	528	45,315	12,000	21.7	
Jasper	339	43,425	41,100	122.0	95%
Roach	393	80,034	60,450	154.0	50%
French	299	51,876	32,531	109.0	85%
Dennis	189	73,080	71,580	379.0	40%
Oakland	334	30,456	18,456	55.3	85%
Riverside	319	32,400	17,400	54.6	50%
Marietta (Lincoln)	330	61,456	43,456	132.0	85%
Ulrich	393	30,000	20,000	50.8	85%
Warren	432	41,300	31,300	72.6	90%
Oglesby	186	164,688	154,686	832.0	10%
Pugh	565	156,200	133,700	237.0	85%
Durfee	572	122,850	64,350	112.0	75%
Gastman	399	22,176	9,676	24.2	90%
Jackson	400	63,020	43,020	108.0	80%
Total	6,939	1,068,204	753,705	2,464.2	

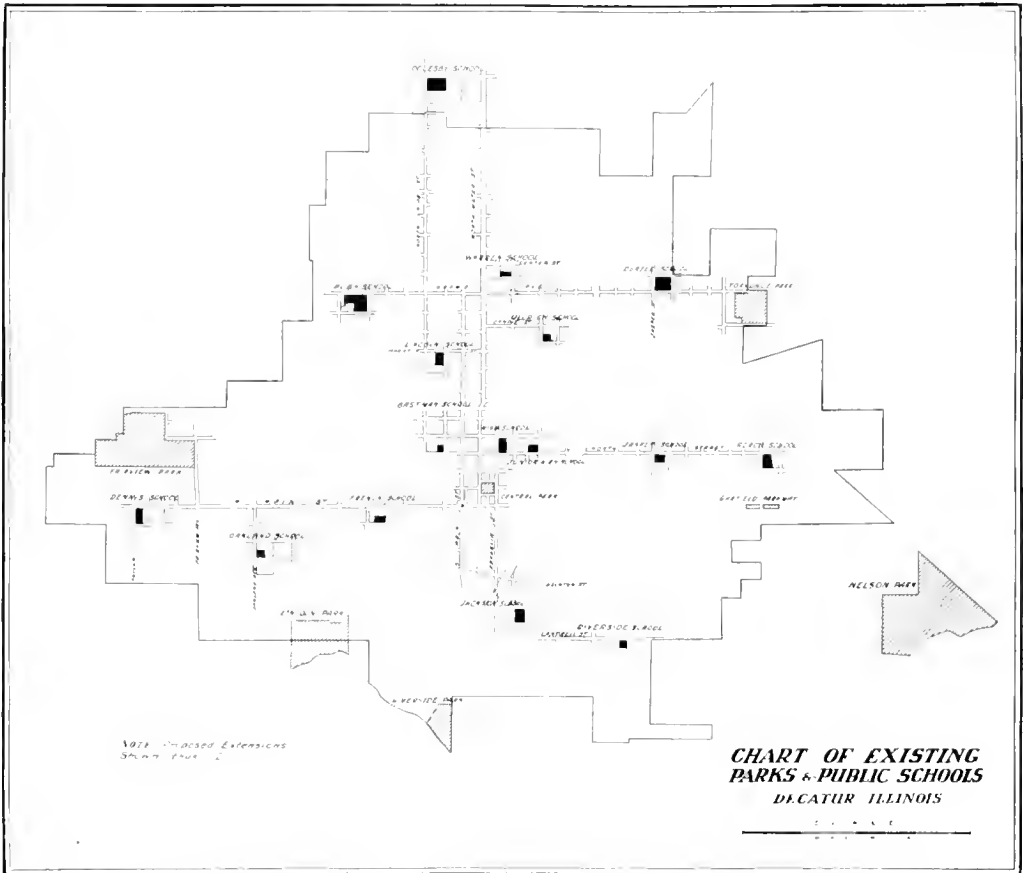
Total area occupied by schools, 24.5 acres.

Average amount of play space to the child, 108.5 square feet.

In connection with the schools, the city plan is concerned chiefly in the matter of providing adequate space and in fixing the location of new sites to take care of the school system as the city develops in size.

Proposed school sites in outlying plotting are designated on the plan and are dealt with in the subject of parks.

Further consideration should be given to the matter of enlarging school sites which are manifestly inadequate in size. It is held by authorities that at least one hundred square feet of avail-



The Above Chart Shows Recommended Extensions to Present School Grounds

able play area is needed for each child in attendance at the school. This being aside from space devoted to lawns, flower beds and other restricted places where children are barred from playing.

This, however, does not entirely meet the situation, unless the district from which the school draws its pupils has reached its maximum density of population, otherwise there is always a possibility that the school building will have to be enlarged, thereby cutting down the present play space. Indeed, the tendency is to secure more land for schools than would give the above standard.

Many cities are refraining from erecting grade schools on less than a full city block, where the blocks measure about five acres. Some cities, as for instance, Gary, Indiana, are building schools on not less than twice this area.

It is however manifestly out of the question for any city of the ordinary financial condition to enlarge its present school sites to meet these demands. To enlarge the average school site means to acquire contiguous lots, often times improved with costly buildings. It therefore becomes a project which must be undertaken with extreme conservatism.

Recommendations have been made recently by the business manager of the Decatur school system, Mr. Kinkade, taking up in detail the apparent need of each school with respect to ground enlargement. Our report is made independently but coincides to a considerable extent with Mr. Kinkade's recommendations.

Taking up the schools in sequence, we would advise as follows:

HIGH SCHOOL

While play grounds such as are built for grade schools are not needed at the high school, there is need for plenty of space surrounding such a building. First of all, there should be adequate setting for the building.

The Decatur high school suffers in this regard. Any building of a public nature, as costly and presenting as good design as Decatur's high school, should have enough vacant land surrounding it to present the building to view to the best advantage. Again there is a psychological reason why a suitable environment should surround the high school in which boys and girls of the impressionistic age are in attendance. There should be given space

enough around the building to permit of a dignified, restful and beautiful landscape treatment.

In connection with any high school, there should furthermore be provided, a well equipped athletic field for the use of both boys and girls. This should include a running track, baseball and football fields, tennis courts, jumps, athletic apparatus, bleachers and other paraphernalia necessary for athletic events and to accommodate spectators. Such a field may properly be placed at some distance from the school as will be necessary in Decatur.

We recommend that the remainder of the block on which the high school is now situated be secured.



JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL AND DECATUR HIGH SCHOOL
Practically No Space Was Provided Around These Buildings for Recreation or for Adequate Setting

The athletic field could be placed on the proposed park at Garfield and Water Streets, where ample room would be afforded for a thoroughly adequate and modern equipment and where the topography of the ground is excellent for the purpose.

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

We recommend the consideration of three new sites for Junior High Schools aside from the new Pugh School. The first being at the proposed site on Johns Hill, the second near the Oakland School and the third in the newly plotted area, northwest of the proposed factory district.

Consideration has been given to the location of a Junior High

on the site of the Durfee School at Grand and Jasper Streets. This however does not seem satisfactory, for the reason that in case of the carrying out of the factory district project, this section would naturally tend to light industries, warehouses and the like, thereby robbing the school of its tributary population.

The location of the present Junior High at Eldorado and Broadway we believe to be unsatisfactory, both from the standpoint of tributary population and proximity to railroads and industries.

A Junior High School should be placed as nearly as possible in the center of a group of grade schools, in turn serving a rather distinct section of the city. In case new schools are built as suggested above, it would probably be wise to abandon the old Junior High and dispose of the property.

PUGH SCHOOL

The grounds of this school are ample in size and should not be encroached upon by the New Junior High. We concur in Mr. Kinkade's suggestion to secure lots on Leafland and Grand Avenue, thereby giving necessary room for the grounds of the new building.

OAKLAND SCHOOL

This school occupies a space 160x188 feet, giving but 55.3 square feet of play space to the child. We recommend that the school board acquire property to the north and including the rest of the half block.

RIVERSIDE SCHOOL

This school is located in a rather sparsely settled district which however bids fair to rapidly increase in density. If allowed to remain where it is, the entire block should be taken, which in this case would give only 72,000 square feet. More land could be secured to the south, taking the next entire block and closing Lincoln Street. We believe, however, that a better arrangement would be to abolish Riverside School as well as Jackson School, three blocks away and combine these on the new grounds at Johns Hill, where the sixteen acre school park proposed would adequately accommodate the grade pupils of both districts.

The Jackson School situated as it is, near the railroad, is restricted as to its drawing territory. With a modern plant at Johns Hill, accommodating territory as far as the railroad and for a half mile to the south and east and with a new school site directly northeast of the Country Club, a better distribution would be obtained.

ULRICH SCHOOL

We recommend to acquire the remainder of the block, or failing to do this, to acquire the rest of the half block as far as Morgan Street.

GASTMAN SCHOOL

This school we believe should be abolished for school purposes, although it could serve well as an administration building for the school board. It is on the very edge of the district being shut off on the east by business houses. This school draws a number of pupils from the territory lying to the east of the business district and between it and the Illinois Central railroad. We believe it would be better to enlarge the Jasper School facilities for these



Scant Room for Play at One of Decatur's Schools

pupils or in case the old Junior High School be not removed, use it for this section, thereby doing away with the necessity of having the children cross the business district to the Gastman School.

A new school should be located further to the west where it could serve the district better.

ROACH SCHOOL

This school at William and North Fourth Streets, while occupying fairly comfortable quarters at present, will in all probability be crowded in a very few years. The neighborhood is not over 50% density and the enrollment of the school will probably be more than double in the next ten or twelve years. This situation is made apparent by the portable building already on the ground. The securing of the rest of the block on which the building stands, should be considered.

WARREN SCHOOL

The building will probably have to be replaced in the next few years. Fortunately, the district has practically reached its maximum density, at least until apartment houses crowd out the individual homes. This, however, is not impossible, considering the industrial development which is apt to take place directly to the east. If this site is enlarged, it would seem logical to extend the grounds to the north on a line with the present west line of the property. This would remove eight houses and would be a somewhat costly undertaking.

JASPER SCHOOL

This school at present occupies nearly the whole block. The building lots remaining are poorly arranged and the school as well as the neighborhood would be improved by taking the remainder of the block for school purposes.

DENNIS SCHOOL

While there is shown a ratio of 379 square feet to the child at this school, the neighborhood has only about 40% density. The building is so placed as to give a good foreground, but does not give satisfactory space for playgrounds. The site should be extended east to take in approximately twice the present area.

FRENCH SCHOOL

We recommend the extension of this ground to the west, taking the remainder of the half block.

The grounds of nearly all schools in Decatur could be improved by planting and the installation of playground equipment. Each site should be studied and a carefully drawn ground plan prepared. Considerable work of improvement could be accomplished by the pupils under proper direction.

The Civic Center

Post Office Site

Central Park Site

Washington Street Site

The Civic Center Plan

THE CIVIC CENTER

THE primary reason for city planning in general and the particular reason for the Decatur plan is based on the assumption that the city is to grow larger. If this is true, there is no fact more clear than that the public buildings now serving the city will in time become inadequate and will have to be replaced by larger structures. This has been the repeated history in other cities as well as Decatur and there is no reason to suppose that conditions will change in this respect in the future.

The fallacy of waiting until the last moment before selecting sites for public buildings has been demonstrated times without number. There invariably occurs factional strife and jealousies and the inevitable happens that some particular site is selected, usually inadequate in size and often in such a location as to have small possibilities for approach and setting for the costly building to be erected. Sufficient room is rarely provided for future extensions and in a decade or so the same process is apt to be repeated.

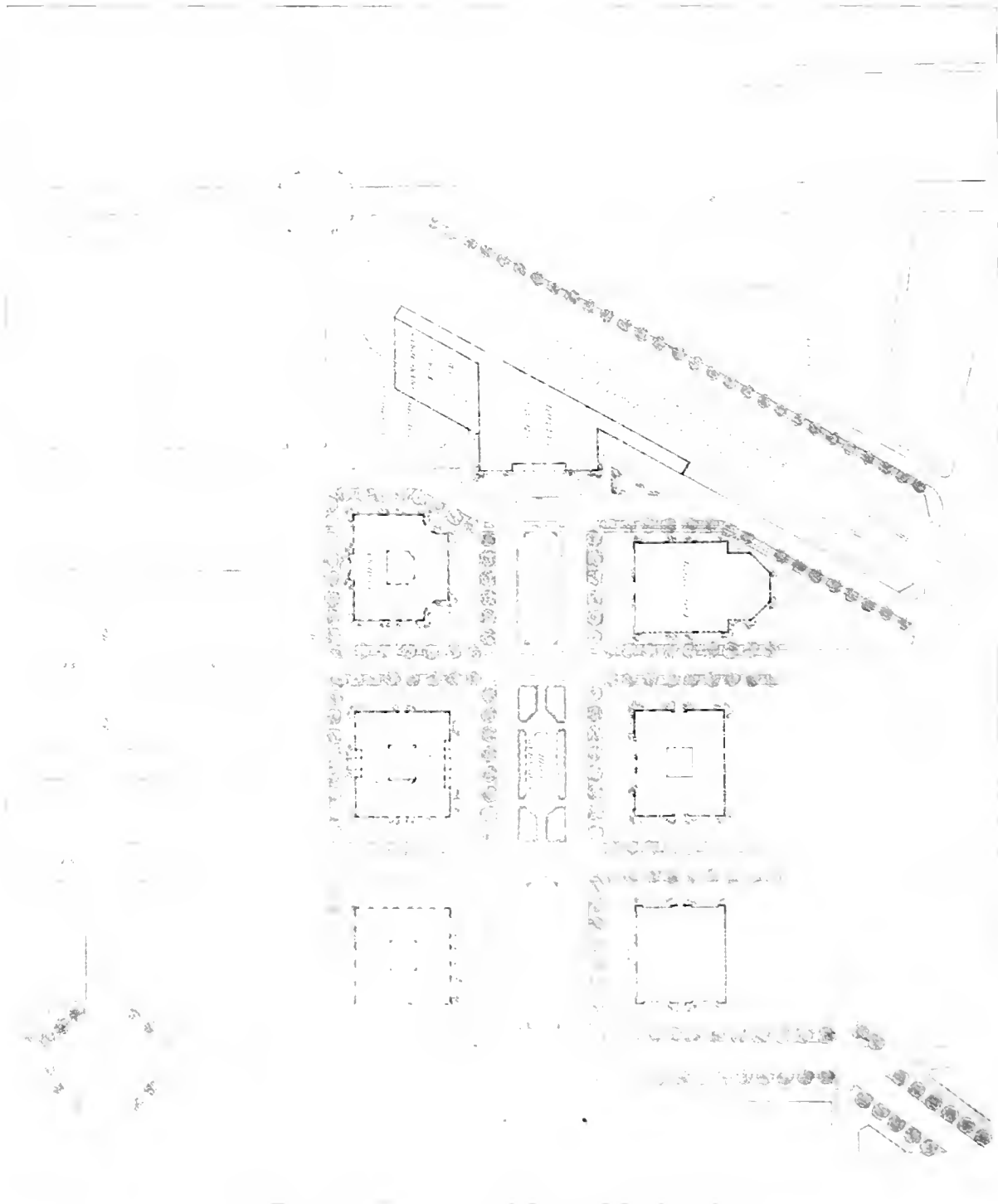
By the selection in advance of an ample area, properly located, on which public buildings as they are needed may be installed harmoniously, not only is the city provided with a beautiful feature which will be a matter of pride to the citizens and of advertising value, but room will be provided for additions as they are needed.

Assuming that such a group of public buildings is desired, the matter of location immediately presents itself. There appear to be three possible locations for a civic center in Decatur.

POST OFFICE SITE

The first would use as a nucleus, the present post office and library. Around these could be grouped other public buildings which might in turn be connected with the present stations or a union station by an avenue or plaza.

The chief advantage of this scheme would be the utilization of the two buildings, namely the post office and library, both excellent examples of architecture.



Proposed Location and Arrangement of Public Buildings

The disadvantages would be:

The insertion of a public group directly in line with the present business extension of the city.

The location of a station remote from the business section.

The great cost of acquiring necessary land for public buildings.

The cost of widening the connecting street.

The detached relations of the important elements.

CENTRAL PARK SITE

The second location would involve property extending from Central Park to the railroad and lying between Main and William Streets. In addition it would bring into use Central Park and the vacant property directly east of the railroad and south of Prairie Street.

The advantages of this site would be as follows:

It is one block nearer the present business center than the third or what may be termed the Washington Street site.

It would utilize Central Park.

For these reasons the location would perhaps be more popular at the onset and this popularity would no doubt aid materially in carrying out the project.

The proposed park east of the railroad would fit into this scheme admirably, especially if the house lots along Prairie Avenue were taken over.

The plan would necessarily do away with the coal mine shaft, which in many respects would be desirable from the standpoint of improving the attractiveness of the city.

The civic center would be approached from the east by an existing subway on Prairie Street.

By the proposed treatment of Central Park, a dignified axis could be given to the layout which would balance the Union Station.

The chief disadvantages of this site are as follows:

The cost of the area needed as based on the assessor's records would be \$550,000.00, or an average of 57 3/10 cents per square foot. This is largely influenced by the character of the improvements on the blocks lying between Main and William Streets, directly east of Franklin. Here an established business section

would have to be destroyed as well as the business establishments along the streets to the east.

The location of the Union Station at this point offers some structural difficulties. It probably would not be considered feasible to span Prairie Street with the main structure because of the steep grade encountered in going through the subway. Therefore, the architectural advantage of facing the main building on the axis of the panel would be lost, although it would be perfectly possible to span the subway with a clock tower or campanile, which would give the desired balance to the plan. While this tower could be used for offices, its practicability as a station adjunct might be questioned by the railroad companies.

The civic center placed here would be more or less shut off from view from Water Street on account of the business blocks to the north and south of Central Park. The building group would be at a lower level than Water Street and would have the appearance of being in a depression, viewed from this thoroughfare. Tall business blocks of mixed architecture and unharmonious facades would encroach upon the composition.

WASHINGTON STREET SITE

The third or Washington Street site would take in property extending between South Main Street and the Illinois Central railroad and extending from Wood Street to a distance of one-half block south of Jefferson Street. For the most part, the improvements consist of moderately priced houses. There is, however, in addition thereto, a modern garage, a new apartment house, the Moose Lodge building, the new city fire station and the car barns now under construction, which would be interfered with in carrying out the plan.

Based on present estimates, the entire property value would amount to \$415,000 or \$135,000 less than the Central Park site. There would be secured 1,206,000 square feet of space as against 960,000 square feet at the latter site. At Washington Street the property has an average value of 34 $\frac{4}{10}$ cents to the square foot, as compared with 57 $\frac{3}{10}$ cents at the Central Park site.

The Washington Street site presents the following advantages:

The Union Station could be made a prominent and balanced element in the group.

The topography is ideal for the arrangement of a convenient station.

The present Court House grounds would be part of the scheme. The enlargement or replacement of the present Court House would therefore be facilitated.

The new fire station and car barns would in no wise interfere with the plan until the time should come for the building of a new post office, possibly a generation hence, at which time, both buildings may be expected to have outlived their usefulness.

The introduction of a civic center at this point, not only would fail to interfere with business development but would be expected to stimulate as such, that section immediately to the north. There would without doubt, be a marked change for the better in the character of improvements to the south and west of the proposed site. The boulevard leading southwest from Decatur and Main Street would pass through property, the improvement of which would be far reaching in its importance.

The Union Station would be placed in close proximity to the two leading hotels. The environs of the civic center would be ad-

mirable for other hotels and apartment buildings, which the city will soon require. The facades of these buildings may be made to harmonize with those of the group.

The location works out well from the standpoint of street car arrangement.

The land, although sloping away to the south, could be easily graded so as to cause opposite buildings of the group to be apparently level.

The group located here would compose well. It would be in harmony with the parkway plans. It would tend to build up rather than to destroy.



View East Along Jefferson Street, Toward Proposed Union Station, Showing Character of Improvements Necessary to Remove



Overlooking Site of Proposed Civic Center

THE CIVIC CENTER PLAN

The scheme submitted provides site for six and possibly seven buildings. Four of these presumably would be the City Hall, County Building, Post Office and Coliseum. In time to come, it is probable that the remaining sites would be used for an armory, museum, art gallery or buildings of like nature.

Already there is an obvious need of a city hall. This will perhaps be one of the first buildings to be considered.

While the present post office is adequate for the time being, it may be assumed that well within the life of this plan, there will be found reason to renew the building. At such a time its relocation at a point near the railroads in order to expedite the handling of mail will, in all probability, be deemed advisable.

As a city emerges from the village class, the need of placing the post office near the railroad station so that the least possible delay will be experienced in taking the mail from the cars and placing it on the sorting racks always becomes apparent. As a city grows larger, the post office building becomes less a rendezvous and more a plant for distribution of mail. It is also important that the building be placed conveniently near to car lines extending in all directions through the city.

With the post office placed as suggested, mail could be taken from the interurban and steam trains and carried, possibly by

means of a tunnel, to the building, and thence distributed through the city by carriers, with the utmost rapidity.

Opposite the post office would be an admirable site for an armory. A spur track can be carried to the building for the loading and unloading of stores, troops and the like.

It also has the advantage of being on the focal point of the proposed system of street car lines.

The slope of the ground at this site makes it possible to erect the building with minimum excavation for basement, while the floor of the main structure would be level with those of the other buildings of the group. Space is here provided for a structure which could easily accommodate ten thousand people, if such a size should be desired.

The group would take the form of a rectangular plaza, terminating on the west by a colonnade which might appropriately assume the form of a memorial to those who served Decatur in the world war. The buildings would be placed on the property lines of Washington and Jefferson Streets so that they could be erected without interference with these streets. Later the intervening property could be acquired and the drives of the plaza rearranged. These drives would be carried in parallel lines through the group, the center parking being developed with pools. The buildings having a set back of eighty feet from the drives, would thereby be given ample foreground.



Site of Proposed Civic Center

The Carrying Out of the Plan

THE CARRYING OUT OF THE PLAN

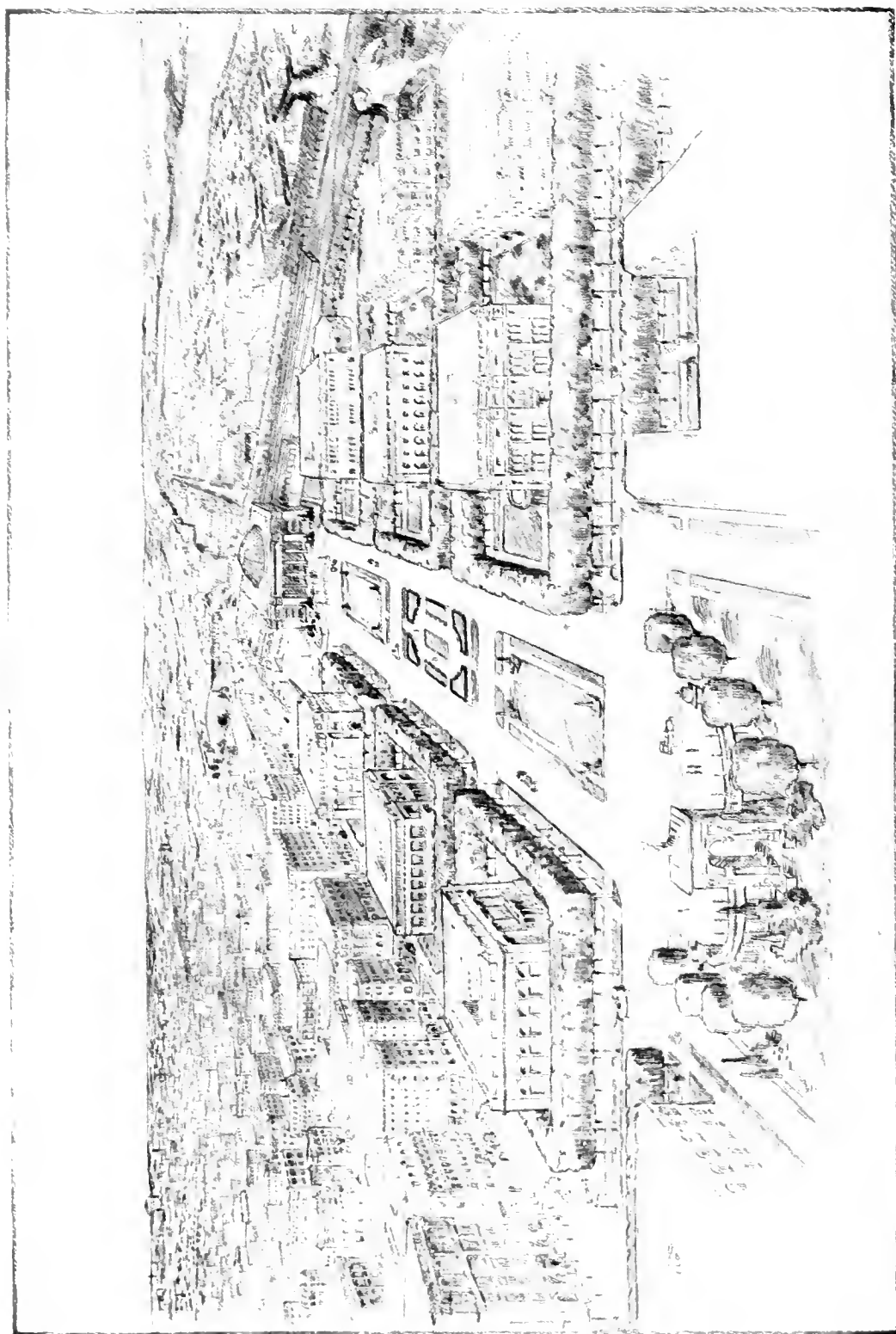
HOW to apply the foregoing plan of Decatur to the ground, how even to inaugurate its application are questions which will at once present themselves to the members of the plan commission.

The immensity of the project, the enormous cost involved, the difficulties attendant upon convincing railroad and other corporations of the value of sweeping changes, the length of time which must elapse before many of the projects will even become opportune, the arduous task of arousing and keeping awake public sentiment—all these and many other discouraging aspects will no doubt occur to the members of this body.

It will be realized that no law on the statute books of the state makes possible an official plan commission much less the carrying out of such a comprehensive series of benefits as are here outlined. The plan commission of Decatur, an unofficial body, having not even advisory powers granted by law and being without funds other than those secured by contributions, is confronted with the task of moulding the city's destiny.

The situation might savor of the ludicrous were we not reminded of the fact that through such volunteer agencies have the big things of our country been accomplished. No greater powers were needed to establish a nation behind Plymouth Rock nor to declare Independence from a mother country, to build a thousand cities like Decatur and to establish justice, education, industry and civilization in a hitherto untamed land than those held at first by such volunteer groups as this.

Decatur's plan will be carried out if the people of Decatur will it. It is but necessary to win the people to the plan and to hold their interest. To win public approval is the first great task and for this work there must be careful organization on the part of the plan board. The first step toward carrying out this work of introducing the plan to the people has been well taken. A plan board has been formed which is essentially non-partisan and which will therefore appeal to the citizens generally. Education to the benefits of the plan should not be of the nature of propaganda—there is nothing



Bird's Eye View Showing Proposed Civic Center

in the city plan to exploit but should be a frank and honest explanation of the plan's merits.

It may be safely assumed that if the plan is generally approved by leading business men and by the public, by far the greater number of projects set forth will in due time be accomplished.

The plan only shows a better way to do what will be undertaken in any event. No special laws are needed to erect public buildings or to group these harmoniously. Again, in the selection of parks, as the city takes on size and more parks are needed, they will as a matter of course be provided and the city plan will be followed generally unless a better course presents itself. On the other hand, the plan will be effective in checking movements for carrying out costly changes, the fallacy of which may be seen at a glance when compared with the balanced structure which the new plan represents.

The thoroughness with which the people are made cognizant of the benefits of the city plan will reflect at once upon the attitude of succeeding city administrations, which in turn will secure the passage of such ordinances as may be found essential.

It will be found that a very great part of the plan may be carried out through the exercise of these local ordinances and by means of police powers under the jurisdiction of city authorities. These powers have to do with the safety, health and morals of the community and in governing nuisances, encroachments upon streets and other public property.

Powers of Eminent Domain may be exercised for the establishment of parks, school sites and other classes of public property. In some states this power of Eminent Domain has been increased to include that very important aid in city improvement, namely the subsequent disposal of that portion of the land taken by condemnation which is not needed for the improvement. A law permitting such excess condemnation of land, carefully framed to safeguard against injustice to the individual, may be eventually passed in Illinois through the efforts of civic bodies like this plan commission.

Many benefits suggested may be realized through the beneficence of public spirited citizens. Gifts of the nature of park lands, statuary, fountains, public buildings, etc., may be looked for with

greater frequency when there is known to be a definite plan toward which the city is working.

In matters pertaining to the rearrangement of railroad lines, recourse may be taken to the state railroad commission with the assumption that fair decisions would be given in instances where human life is in any wise jeopardized, such as in projects relating to grade crossing elimination.

In dealing with railroad corporations, which also have the right of Eminent Domain and whose rights of tenancy have been granted by state or federal acts, much less may be generally gained by attempting force than by demonstrating expediency and by the city's showing a willingness to go half way to bring about changes of mutual advantage.

The extension of car lines and the rearrangement of routes may effectively be handled by the power of franchise.

In the opening through or widening of streets, several processes may be resorted to, namely that of special assessment, condemnation or the establishment of building lines which will become effective upon the erection of new buildings.

The most important of all, the building of future streets according to a scientific plan, will for the time being have to depend largely on personal appeal and on the attitude of the city authorities in accepting new subdivisions. A law should be passed in Illinois similar to the Wisconsin law giving authority to the city government to refuse acceptance of plots which are unsatisfactory. It is, however, not unlikely that the City Commission would be within its rights to reject plots not in conformity with a scientific plan and to refuse to extend sewers, water service, police and fire protection to such areas. It is unthinkable, however, that a real estate owner, depending upon the good will of his fellow citizens for the success of his venture, would persist in arranging new streets and lots against what seemed to be for the best interest of the community at large. The fact that the plan shows an economical arrangement of land and a street layout which is intended to develop equally all sections of the outlying districts should appeal to the land owner's good business sense.

.....

Illinois has one law* recently passed which is particularly important, namely, the zone act passed by the fifty-first assembly, a reprint of which is given below. Used comprehensively and in connection with the plan for the future city, this law makes possible that which is to be most desired, the predisposition of fixed areas for different classes of building. Used as it might be used to establish little zones here and there throughout the city without relation to each other, the law would prove not only derogatory to the city's interest but indeed ridiculous. The exercise of this law in Decatur should not be attempted until it may be applied to a comprehensive scheme of zoning not only for the Decatur of today but for a generation to come.

*See Appendix.

Conclusion

Appendix—Illinois Zoning Law

CONCLUSION

IT HAS been a pleasure to study the city of Decatur and to work out a program for its future. The inadequacy of one or a group of city planners to presume to show how the mistakes of past generations can best be corrected and how those of the future generation can be best thwarted has not been overlooked.

Our justification is that for the first time these have been seriously studied as a single problem. Could this have been done forty years ago, our work would have been unnecessary and Decatur would today enjoy the distinction which Washington and other well planned cities so enjoy.

Respectfully submitted,

MYRON HOWARD WEST.

APPENDIX

ILLINOIS ZONING LAW

AN ACT TO CONFER CERTAIN ADDITIONAL POWERS UPON CITY COUNCILS IN CITIES AND PRESIDENTS AND BOARDS OF TRUSTEES IN VILLAGES CONCERNING BUILDINGS, THE INTENSITY OF USE OF LOT AREAS, THE CLASSIFICATION OF BUILDINGS, TRADES AND INDUSTRIES WITH RESPECT TO LOCATION AND REGULATION, THE CREATION OF RESIDENTIAL, INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND OTHER DISTRICTS, AND THE EXCLUSION FROM AND REGULATION WITHIN SUCH DISTRICTS OF CLASSES OF BUILDINGS, TRADES AND INDUSTRIES.

Section 1. Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly: That in addition to existing powers, and to the end that adequate light, pure air and safety from fire and other dangers may be secured, that the taxable value of land and buildings throughout the city or village may be conserved, that congestion in the public streets may be lessened or avoided, and that the public health, safety, comfort and welfare may otherwise be promoted, the city council in each city, and the president and board of trustees in each village, shall have the following powers:

To regulate and limit the height and bulk of buildings hereafter to be erected, to regulate and limit the intensity of the use of lot areas and to regulate and determine the area of yards, courts and other open spaces within and surrounding such buildings; to classify, regulate and restrict the location of trades and industries and the location of buildings designed for specified uses; to make regulations designating the trades and industries that shall be excluded or subjected to special regulations within fixed districts and designating uses for which buildings may not be erected or altered in such district; To divide the city or village or portions of same into districts of such number, shape and area as may be deemed best suited to carry out the purposes of this Act, including the power to create and establish residential districts within which new buildings designed for business may be excluded, restricted or limited, and including the power to regulate and restrict the location of trades and industries and buildings designed for same in such a way that classes of industries which affect the general comfort of the public may be excluded from districts where commercial and professional pursuits which do not affect the comfort of the public are carried on; and to prevent the alteration or remodeling of existing buildings in such a way as to avoid the restrictions and limitations lawfully imposed on any such district; provided, that in ordinances passed under the authority of this Act due allowance shall be made for existing conditions, the conservation of property values, the direction of building development to the best advantage of the entire city or village, and the uses to which property is devoted at the time of the enactment of any such ordinance, and that the powers by this Act given shall not be exercised so as to deprive the owner of any existing property of its use for the purpose to which it is then lawfully devoted: And provided further, that nothing in this Act shall be construed to prevent additions to and alterations of any existing plant or building made to further the purpose to which it is then lawfully devoted.

2. No ordinance under the authority of this Act shall be enacted until a public hearing has been held upon the subject matter of the proposed ordinance before a commission, board or committee authorized by the city council in cities, or the president and board of trustees in villages, to investigate and make recommendations concerning such subject matter; and an opportunity afforded the owners of lands or lots within the proposed district to file written objections as herein provided for. Such

public hearing shall be held only after publication in a newspaper of such city or village of a notice of the time and place of such hearing at least thirty days in advance thereof and the posting of such notice at not less than four different places within such district, which notice shall indicate the boundaries of the territory to be affected both by the designation of the street and house numbers included and by the legal description of the property therein, and shall state what regulations under the authority of this Act affecting such territory are to be considered at such hearing. In addition to making publication and posting notices as herein provided, the officer or officers authorized to hold said public hearing shall cause a notice of similar import to be mailed to the person shown by the records of the county collector as the one who paid the taxes during the last preceeding calendar year on each lot, block, tract or parcel of land situated within such territory, at the residence of the person so paying the taxes on each lot, block, tract or parcel of land, if the same can on diligent inquiry be found, and if the same cannot on diligent inquiry be found, such notice shall be directed to such person at the general delivery of the post office in the city or village in which said district is proposed to be made. The affidavit of the officer designated by ordinance as the one to give such notice to the effect that such publication was made in such newspaper and by such posting and that such notices were mailed shall be taken as conclusive evidence that sufficient notice was given to all parties interested. When a district is first created no ordinance shall be passed hereunder which shall enlarge or reduce or otherwise change the boundaries of the territory as indicated in such notice without another such notice and public hearing. Said public hearing shall be conducted by the said commission, board or committee and may be temporarily adjourned and reconvened from time to time until final adjournment at the discretion of the said commission, board or committee. After such final adjournment said commission, board or committee shall make its report and recommendation to the city council or board of trustees, as the case may be, and file the same with the city or village clerk within ten (10) days of the date of such adjournment.

3. At any time after the public hearing herein provided for, and not more than thirty (30) days after such commission, board or committee shall file its report as required herein, the owners of a majority of the land or lots within the proposed district according to the frontage on the streets dedicated to public use shall have the right to file their objection in writing to the formation of such district or to the regulations or restrictions proposed therein. Such written objection may consist of one sheet or of a number of sheets bound together, with the signatures of such owners, the location of the property and the amount of frontage owned by each stated thereon after each name, and the same may be filed with the commission, board or committee designated as the proper authority to conduct such proceedings. Upon the filing of such objection, if it shall appear that the owners of such majority according to frontage are opposed to the formation or creation of such district as is proposed, or to the regulations or restrictions proposed for any such district, all proceedings for same shall be discontinued, and no ordinance for the creation or formation of such district in such territory shall be passed, and no new proceedings for the formation or creation of such district within the said territory shall be begun within one year after the filing of such objection: Provided, that if said objection shall state that it is directed only against certain of the proposed regulations and restrictions, specifying same, new proceedings as herein provided for may be begun at any time for the purpose of creating such district after changing or modifying the proposed regulations and restrictions.

4. The regulations imposed and the districts created under the authority of this Act may be amended, supplemented or changed from time to time by ordinance after the ordinance establishing same has gone into effect, but no such change shall be made without notice and public hearing in the same manner as when such district is first

created, and in case of written protest against a proposed amendment, supplement or change, signed by the owners of twenty per cent of the frontage proposed to be altered, or by the owners of twenty per cent of the frontage immediately adjoining or across an alley therefrom, or by the owners of twenty per cent of the frontage directly opposite the frontage proposed to be altered, filed with the said commission, board or committee so designated, such amendment shall not be passed except by the favorable vote of two-thirds of the members of the city council in cities, or the members of the board of trustees in villages: Provided, that it shall always be within the power of the owners of a majority of the lands and lots according to frontage within a proposed addition to such district to prevent such addition by filing objection thereto as herein provided.


5. Upon the passage of an ordinance under the authority of this Act a certified copy of same, together with a plat of the territory affected certified to by the mayor of the city or president of the board of trustees of the village, as the case may be, shall be filed for record in the office of the recorder of deeds of the county in which the said territory is located, and no such ordinance shall take effect until the same is so recorded.

Approved June 28, 1919.

LOUIS L. EMMERSON,
Secretary of State



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